

Poetry of The Little Review, March 1914 – March 1915

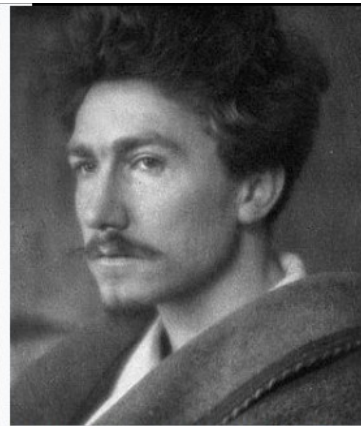
Volume 1 of *Magazine Poetry up to 1926*.



Portrait of Eunice Tietjens



Rupert Chawner Brooke



Ezra Pound photographed in 1913 by Alvin Langdon Coburn



Lindsay in 1913

Begun in March 1914, Margaret C. Anderson's Chicago-based literary magazine, The Little Review, ran until 1929, when pruderies of the day (aka the US Postal Service) inspired its cancellation. Up to that point, however, Miss Anderson published early work by some of the world's most influential writers, including novelists Ernest Hemingway and James Joyce. It was, after all, Anderson's publishing of Joyce's Ulysses which got her in trouble in the first place. Another standout in this magazine was its poetry – actual verse, poet profiles, and criticism. Following is a collection of all the poems and selected short works from the magazine in it's first year of publication.

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Five Japanese Prints

Project Gutenberg's The Little Review, March 1914 (Vol. 1, No. 1), by Various

by Arthur Davison Ficke

I. KIYONOBU SPEAKS

*The actor on his little stage
Struts with a mimic rage.--
Across my page
My passion in his form shall tower from age to age.*

*What he so crudely dreams
In vague and fitful gleams,
The crowd esteems.--
Well! let the future judge, if his or mine this seems--*

*This calm Titanic mould
Stalking in colours bold
Fold upon fold--
This lord of dark, this dream I dreamed of old!*

II FIGURE BY OKUMURA MASANOBU

*Garbed in flowing folds of light,
Azure, emerald, rose, and white,
Watchest thou across the night.*

*Crowned with splendor is thine head:
All the princes great and dead
Round thy limbs their state have shed--*

*Calm, immutable to stand--
Gracious head and poised hand--
O'er the years that flow like sand.*

III PILLAR-PRINT BY KIYOMITSU

*A place for giant heads to take their rest
Seems her pale breast.*

*Her sweeping robe trails like the cloud and wind
Storms leave behind.*

*The ice of the year, and its Aprilian part,
Sleep in her heart.*

*Wherefore, small marvel that her footsteps be
Like strides of Destiny!*

IV PILLAR-PRINT BY TOYONOBU

*O lady of the long robes, the slow folds flowing--
Lady of the white breast, the dark and lofty head--
Dwells there any wonder, the way that thou art going--
Or goest thou toward the dead?*

*So calm thy solemn steps, so slow the long lines sweeping
Of garments pale and ghostly, of limbs as grave as sleep--
I know not if thou, spectre, hast love or death in keeping,
Or goest toward which deep.*

*Thou layest thy robes aside with gesture large and flowing--
Is it for love or sleep--is it for life or death?
I would my feet might follow the path that thou art going,
And thy breath be my breath.*

V PILLAR-PRINT BY HARUNOBU

*From an infinite distance, the ghostly music!
Few and slender the tones, of delicate silver,
As stars are broidered on the veil of evening....*

*He passes by, the flute and the dreaming player--
Slow are his steps, his eyes are gravely downcast;
His pale robes sway in long folds with his passing.*

*Out of the infinite distance, a ghostly music
Returns--in slender tones of delicate silver,
As stars are broidered on the veil of evening.*

The Garden

*My heart shall be thy garden. Come, my own,
Into thy garden; thine be happy hours
Among my fairest thoughts, my tallest flowers,
From root to crowning petal thine alone.*

*Thine is the place from where the seeds are sown
Up to the sky enclosed, with all its showers.
But ah, the birds, the birds! Who shall build bowers
To keep these thine? O friend, the birds have flown.*

*For as these come and go, and quit our pine
To follow the sweet season, or, new-comers,
Sing one song only from our alder-trees,*

*My heart has thoughts, which, though thine eyes hold mine,
Flit to the silent world and other summers,
With wings that dip beyond the silver seas.*

--_Alice Meynell's Poems._ (Charles Scribner's Sons.)

The Major Symphony

GEORGE SOULE

*Round splendor of the harp's entonéd gold
Throbbing beneath the pleading violins--
That hundred-choiring voice that wins and wins
To over-filling song; the bright and bold
Clamor of trumpets; 'cellos that enfold
Richly the flutes; and basses that like djinns
Thunder their clumsy threatening, as begins
The oboe's mystic plaint of sorrows old:--*

*Are these the symphony? No, it is will
In passion striving to surmount the world,
Growing in sensuous dalliance, sudden whirled
To ecstasies of shivering joy, and still
Marching and mastering, singing mightily,
Consummate when the silence makes it free.*

How a Little Girl Danced

Nicholas Vachel Lindsay

*_Being a Reminiscence of Certain Private Theatricals_*

(Dedicated to Lucy Bates)

*Oh, cabaret dancer,
I know a dancer
Whose eyes have not looked
On the feasts that are vain.
I know a dancer;
I know a dancer,
Whose soul has no bond
With the beasts of the plain:
Judith the dancer,
Judith the dancer,
With foot like the snow
And with step like the rain.*

*Oh, thrice-painted dancer,
Vaudeville dancer,
Sad in your spangles,
With soul all astrain:
I know a dancer,
I know a dancer,
Whose laughter and weeping
Are spiritual gain;
A pure-hearted, high-hearted
Maiden evangel
With strength the dark cynical
Earth to disdain.*

*Flowers of bright Broadway!
You of the chorus
Who sing in the hope
Of forgetting your pain:
I turn to a sister
Of sainted Cecelia,
A white bird escaping
The earth's tangled skein!--
The music of God
In her innermost brooding!*

*The whispering angels
Her footsteps sustain!*

*Oh, proud Russian dancer:
Praise for your dancing!
No clean human passion
My rhyme would arraign.
You dance for Apollo
With noble devotion:
A high-cleansing revel
To make the heart sane.
But Judith the dancer
Prays to a spirit
More white than Apollo
And all of his train.*

*I know a dancer
Who finds the true God-head;
Who bends o'er a brazier
In Heaven's clear plain.
I know a dancer,
I know a dancer,
Who lifts us toward peace
From this Earth that is vain:--
Judith the dancer,
Judith the dancer,
With foot like the snow,
And with step like the rain.*

The Dream of the Children

*The children awoke in their dreaming
While earth lay dewy and still:
They followed the rill in its gleaming
To the heart-light of the hill.*

*From their feet as they strayed in the meadow
It led through caverned aisles,
Filled with purple and green light and shadow
For mystic miles on miles.*

-- From A. E.'s Collected Poems. _

The Poetry of Rupert Brooke

Margaret C. Anderson

Poems, by Rupert Brooke. (Sidgwick and Jackson, London.)

The unusual thing about Rupert Brooke--the young Oxford don whose poetry is just finding its way in this country--is that he has graduated from the French school without having taken a course in decadence. The result is a type of English poetry minus those qualities we think of as typical of "the British mind" and plus those that stand as the highest expression of the French spirit. There is nothing of self-conscious reserve about Mr. Brooke; and yet it is not so obvious a quality as his frank, unashamed revealment that places him definitely with the French type. It is rather a matter of form--that quality of saying a thing in the most economic way it can be said, of finding the simple and the inevitable word. Mr. Brooke stands very happily between a poet like Alfred Noyes, in whom one rarely finds that careful selection, and the esthetes whose agony in that direction becomes monotonous. For example, in the first sonnet of this collection:

*Oh! Death will find me, long before I tire
Of watching you; and swing me suddenly
Into the shade and loneliness and mire
Of the last land! There, waiting patiently,*

*One day, I think, I'll feel a cool wind blowing,
See a slow light across the Stygian tide,
And hear the Dead about me stir, unknowing,
And tremble. And I shall know that you have died,*

*And watch you, a broad-browed and smiling dream,
Pass, light as ever, through the lightless host,
Quietly ponder, start, and sway, and gleam--
Most individual and bewildering ghost!--*

*And turn, and toss your brown delightful head
Amusedly, among the ancient Dead.*

There are about eighteen words in this one sonnet chosen with infinite pains; and yet the effect of the whole is quite unlabored--an effect of spontaneity reduced to its simplest terms.

Perhaps the point can be made more emphatically by a miscellaneous quotation of single lines, because the poignancy of Rupert Brooke's phrasing leaves me in a torment of inexpressiveness, forced to quote him rather than talk about him. Here are a few: "Like hills at noon or

sunlight on a tree"; "And dumb and mad and eyeless like the sky"; "The soft moan of any grey-eyed lute-player"; "Some gaunt eventual limit of our light"; "Red darkness of the heart of roses"; "And long noon in the hot calm places"; "My wild sick blasphemous prayer"; "Further than laughter goes, or tears, further than dreaming"; "Against the black and muttering trees"; "And quietness crept up the hill"; "When your swift hair is quiet in death"; "Savage forgotten drowsy hymns"; "And dance as dust before the sun"; "The swift whir of terrible wings"; "Like flies on the cold flesh"; "Clear against the unheeding sky"; "So high a beauty in the air"; "Amazed with sorrow"; "Haggard with virtue"; "Frozen smoke"; "Mist-garlanded," and a thousand other things that somehow have a fashion of striking twelve. There's a long poem about a fish, beginning

*In a cool curving world he lies
And ripples with dark ecstasies.*

that flashes through every tone of the stream's "drowned colour" from "blue brilliant from dead starless skies" to "the myriad hues that lie between darkness and darkness." And there's one about Menelaus and Helen containing this description:

*High sat white Helen, lonely and serene.
He had not remembered that she was so fair,
And that her neck curved down in such a way;*

The simplicity of that last line--but what a picture it is!

The important things about Mr. Brooke, however--and of course this should have been said in the first paragraph--are his sense of life and his feeling for nature. Of the first it might be said that he is strong and radiant and sure--and at the same time reverently impotent. _The Hill_, which I like better than anything in this collection, will illustrate:

*Breathless, we flung us on the windy hill,
Laughed in the sun, and kissed the lovely grass.
You said, "Through glory and ecstasy we pass;
Wind, sun, and earth remain, the birds sing still,
When we are old, are old...." "And when we die
All's over that is ours; and life burns on
Through other lovers, other lips," said I,
--"Heart of my heart, our heaven is now, is won!"*

*"We are Earth's best, that learnt her lesson here.
Life is our cry. We have kept the faith!" we said;
"We shall go down with reluctant tread
Rose-crowned into the darkness!" ... Proud we were,
And laughed, that had such brave true things to say.
--And then you suddenly cried, and turned away.*

Everything in it--with the exception of "kissed the lovely grass," which might easily be spared--is fine; "with unreluctant tread Rose-crowned into the darkness!" is vivid with beauty; and when the simple dignity of "such brave true things to say" has swung you to its great height, the drop in that sudden last line comes with the most moving wistfulness. There are several poems, too long to quote here, which show Mr. Brooke's affinity with the outdoors; but perhaps even five lines from one of them will suggest it:

*Then from the sad west turning wearily,
I saw the pines against the white north sky,
Very beautiful, and still, and bending over
Their sharp black heads against a quiet sky
And there was peace in them....*

Not long ago I asked a poet in whose judgment I have a profound belief, to read these poems of Rupert Brooke's and give me his opinion. After looking at two or three he said he was afraid he wasn't going to like them, but the next day he reported that he wished to retract, making the magnificent concession that "_some_ of Brooke's moods are healthy!" Of course there are a number of things in this volume that can easily be interpreted as unhealthy or repulsive, like the _Wagner_:

*Creeps in half wanton, half asleep,
One with a fat wide hairless face.
He likes love music that is cheap;
Likes women in a crowded place;
And wants to hear the noise they're making.*

*His heavy eyelids droop half-over,
Great pouches swing beneath his eyes.
He listens, thinks himself the lover,
Heaves from his stomach wheezy sighs;
He likes to feel his heart's a-breaking.*

*The music swells. His gross legs quiver.
His little lips are bright with slime.
The music swells. The women shiver,
And all the while, in perfect time
His pendulous stomach hangs a-shaking.*

But it seems something more than that to me. As an attack on German emotionalism--however unjustly, from my point of view, through Wagner--the poem struck me as an exercise of extraordinary cleverness. I don't know that anyone has ever said so effectively the things that ought be said about that type of emotion which feeds not upon life but, inversely, upon emotion.

Mr. Brooke's pictures have much of the quality of Böcklin's. That first sonnet can be imagined in the same tone values as Böcklin's wonderful Isle of the Dead, and the closing lines of Victory need the same medium:

*Down the supernal roads,
With plumes a-tossing, purple flags far flung,
Rank upon rank, unbridled, unforgiving,
Thundered the black battalions of the Gods.*

Seaside needs an artist like Leon Dabo:

*Swiftly out from the friendly lilt of the band,
The crowd's good laughter, the loved eyes of men,
I am drawn nightward; I must turn again
Where, down beyond the low untrodden strand,
There curves and glimmers outward to the unknown
The old unquiet ocean. All the shade
Is rife with magic and movement. I stray alone
Here on the edge of silence, half afraid,*

*Waiting a sign. In the deep heart of me
The sullen waters swell towards the moon,
And all my tides set seaward.
From inland
Leaps a gay fragment of some mocking tune,
That tinkles and laughs and fades along the sand,
And dies between the seawall and the sea.*

How perfect those last three lines are! How skilful, in painting the sea, to concentrate upon something from inland, making the ocean twice as old and vast and unquiet because of that little tinkling tune.

One will find in Rupert Brooke various kinds of things, but never attitudinizing and never insincerity. He is one of the most important of those young Englishmen who are doing so much for modern poetry. He is essentially a poet's poet, and yet his feet are deep in the common soil. Swinburne would have liked him, but the significant thing is that Whitman would, too. There are several poems I have not mentioned that Whitman would have loved.

To a Lost Friend

Eunice Tietjens

*Across the tide of years you come to me,
You whom I knew so long ago.
A poignant letter kept half carelessly,
A faded likeness, dull and gray to see....
And now I know.*

.

*Strange that I knew not then,--that when you stood
In warm, sweet flesh beneath my hand,
Your soul tumultuous as a spring-time flood
And life's new wonder pulsing in your blood,
I could not understand.*

*I could not see your soul like thin red fire
Flash downward to my gaze,
Nor guess the strange, half-understood desire,
The tumult and the question and the ire
Of those far days.*

*I saw your soul stretch longing arms to love
In adolescent shyness bound,
And passionately storm the gods above.
Yet, since my own young heart knew naught thereof,
You never found.*

*It is too late now. You have dropped away
In formless silence from my ken,
And youth's high hopes turn backward to decay.
Yet, oh, my heart were very fain to-day
To love you then!*

*Culture has one great passion--the passion for sweetness and
light. It has one even yet greater!--the passion for making them
prevail.--Matthew Arnold in _Culture and Anarchy_.*

Rebellion

George Soule

*Sing me no song of the wind and rain--
The wind and the rain are better.
I'll swing to the road on the gusty plain
Without any load,
And shatter your fetter.*

*And when you sing of the strange, bright sea,
I'll leave your dark little singing
For the plunging shore where foam leaps free
And long waves roar
And gulls go winging.*

*Sorrow-dark ladies you've dreamed afar;
I stay not to hear their praises.
But here is a woman you cannot mar,
In life arrayed;
Her spirit blazes.*

*I shall not stiffen and die in your songs,
Flatten between your pages,
But trample the earth and jostle the throngs,
Try out life's worth--
And burst all cages!*

Lines for Two Futurists

Arthur Davison Ficke

*Why does all of sharp and new
That our modern days can brew
Culminate in you?*

*This chaotic age's wine
You have drunk--and now decline
Any anodyne.*

*On the broken walls you stand,
Peering toward some stony land
With eye-shading hand.*

*Is it lonely as you peer?
Do you never miss, in fear,
Simple things and dear,*

*Half-remembered, left behind?
Or are backward glances blind
Here where the wind*

*Round the outposts sweeps and cries--
And each distant hearthlight dies
To your peering eyes?...*

*I too stand where you have stood;
And the fever fills my blood
With your cruel mood.*

*Yet some backward longings press
On my heart: yea, I confess
My soul's heaviness.*

*Me a homesick tremor thrills
As I dream how sunlight fills
My familiar hills.*

*Me the yesterdays still hold--
Liegeman still unto the old
Stories sweetly told.*

*Into that profound unknown
Where the earthquake forces strown
Shake each piled stone*

*Look; and exultance smites
Me with joy; the splintered heights
Call me with fierce lights.*

*But a piety still dwells
In my bones; my spirit knells
Solemnly farewells*

*To safe halls where I was born--
To old haunts I leave forlorn
For this perilous morn.*

*Yet I come! I cannot stay!
Be it bitter night, or day
Glorious,--your way*

*I must tread; and on the walls,
Where this flame-swept future calls
To fierce miracles,*

*Lo, I greet you here! But me
Mock not lightly. I come free--
But with agony.*

To E

Sara Teasdale

*The door was opened and I saw you there
And for the first time heard you speak my name,
Then like the sun your sweetness overcame
My shy and shadowy mood; I was aware
That joy was hidden in your happy hair,
And that for you love held no hint of shame;
My eyes caught light from yours, within whose flame
Humor and passion have an equal share.*

*How many times since then have I not seen
Your great eyes widen when you talk of love,
And darken slowly with a far desire;
How many times since then your soul has been
Clear to my gaze as curving skies above,
Wearing like them a raiment made of fire.*

To S

Eunice Tietjens

*From my life's outer orbit, where the night
That bounds my knowledge still is pierced through
By far-off singing planets such as you,
Whose faint, sweet voices come to me like light
In disembodied beauty, keen and bright,--
From this far orbit to my nearer view
You came one day, grown tangible and true
And warm with sympathy and fair with sight.*

*Then I who still had loved your distant voice,
Your songs, shot through with beauty and with tears*

*And woven magic of the wistful years,
I felt the listless heart of me rejoice
And stir again, that had lain stunned so long,
Since I had you, yourself a living song.*

The Poetry of Alice Meynell

Llewellyn Jones

Not least among the stirring events of our present poetical renaissance are the publication of the collected editions of the works of Alice Meynell and Francis Thompson (Scribner). Spiritually akin, mutually influencing one another in material as in more subtle ways, their poetry stands in vivid contrast to the muse of our younger singers, the makers of what English critics hail as a new Georgian Age. That this difference gives them an added significance, and not as some critics have said, a lessened one, is the burden of the present appreciation of the poems of Alice Meynell. For there is a tendency for the reader who is intoxicated with poetic modernity to reason somewhat after this fashion. Here, he will say,--as indeed Mr. Austin Harrison has said of Francis Thompson--is a "reed pipe of neo-mediaevalism ... a poet of the gargoyle," not of this modern world, and so neither in sympathy of thought or melody with us of the twentieth century, its free life and *vers libre*. All this, of course, because, Francis Thompson was--as is Mrs. Meynell--a child of the Catholic Church. Our supposititious reader will continue to the effect that there is no spiritual profit to be had in reading these poets when the modern attitude is to be found in such writers as W. W. Gibson, Masfield, and Hardy. But in so arguing, our reader will be entirely wrong as to the facts, and mistaken in his whole manner of approach to the realm of poetic values.

Mr. Max Eastman, in his charming book, *The Enjoyment of Poetry*, lays stress on the fact that poetry is not primarily the registering of emotions but the expression of keen realizations. A mathematical concept may arouse an emotion, but the poet makes the actual emotion transmissible by his selective power in picking out the focal point of the experience by which it is aroused. If poetry is essentially realization of life, then we have no longer any excuse for asking our poets to share our doctrinal views before we consent to read them. On the contrary, we should be more anxious to read Mrs. Meynell than Mr. Gibson, if we are modernists, for Mr. Gibson may, conceivably, not be able to tell us anything we have not already felt. Mrs. Meynell, on the other hand, can inform our feelings with fresh aspects of experience, and she does so abundantly. Her Catholicism is not mediaevalism, but, in

so far as it is translatable into her poetry it is simply a vocabulary for the expression of certain emotional realizations of life which we modernists find it very hard to express because we do not have the necessary vocabulary. What can be more modern than the doctrine of the immanence of God and his abode in man, that much-discussed "social gospel?" Yet the following poem, not in spite of but through its Catholic terminology, heightens our realization of brotherhood and dependence one upon another. It is entitled *_The Unknown God_*:

*One of the crowd went up,
And knelt before the Paten and the Cup,
Received the Lord, returned in peace, and prayed
Close to my side; then in my heart I said:*

*"O Christ, in this man's life--
This stranger who is Thine--in all his strife,
All his felicity, his good and ill,
In the assaulted stronghold of his will,*

*"I do confess Thee here,
Alive within this life; I know Thee near
Within this lonely conscience, closed away
Within this brother's solitary day.*

*"Christ in his unknown heart,
His intellect unknown--this love, this art,
This battle and this peace, this destiny
That I shall never know, look upon me!*

*"Christ in his numbered breath,
Christ in his beating heart and in his death,
Christ in his mystery! From that secret place
And from that separate dwelling, give me grace."*

The spectacle of a general communion again gives Mrs. Meynell inspiration for a poem whose last two stanzas apply equally as well to the secular, evolutionary view of salvation as they do to the ecclesiastical view, and whose last stanza is most suggestive in the light it throws upon the puzzling discrepancy between the littleness of man and the unlimited material vast in which he finds himself a floating speck:

*I saw this people as a field of flowers,
Each grown at such a price
The sum of unimaginable powers
Did no more than suffice.*

*A thousand single central daisies they,
A thousand of the one;*

*For each, the entire monopoly of day;
For each, the whole of the devoted sun.*

Even so typically modern a philosopher as Henri Bergson would find one of his leading and rather baffling ideas beautifully realized in one of Mrs. Meynell's sonnets. Matter, Bergson tells us, in all its manifestations is moulded by a spiritual push from behind it, so that the sensible world is not a mosaic of atoms obeying fixed laws but rather a cosmic compromise between matter and spirit, a *_modus vivendi_* the operation of which would seem very different to us were our viewpoint that of pure spirit. Says Mrs. Meynell in *_To a Daisy_*:

*Slight as thou art, thou art enough to hide
Like all created things, secrets from me,
And stand, a barrier to eternity.
And I, how can I praise thee well and wide*

*From where I dwell--upon the hither side?
Thou little veil for so great mystery,
When shall I penetrate all things and thee,
And then look back? For this I must abide,*

*Till thou shalt grow and fold and be unfurled
Literally between me and the world.
Then I shall drink from in beneath a spring,*

*And from a poet's side shall read his book.
O daisy mine, what shall it be to look
From God's side even of such a simple thing?*

The sense of what might, perhaps, be called restrained paradox in that sonnet, is frequently met with in Mrs. Meynell's writings, and it corresponds to aspects of reality which the old religious phraseology she has so freshly minted for us is alone fitted to convey. *_The Young Neophyte_* is a beautiful sonnet enshrining the fatefulness of every human action, the gift of the full flower which is implicit in the gift of the smallest bud, the preparation we are constantly making for crises which are yet hidden in the future. *_Thoughts in Separation_* also deals with the paradoxical overcoming of the handicaps of personal absence of our friends through community of thought and feeling. Not only are these paradoxes in human psychology delicately set forth by the poet, but those darker ones of human work and destiny are consolingly illuminated in such a poem as *_Builders of Ruins_* --which does not depend for its quality of consolation upon anything foreign to its poetic truth.

One poem in the book is, perhaps, most remarkable for the light it throws upon the sense in which the term poetic truth may be used, and as showing the difference between the poetic, the realizable, and, therefore, the true side of a religion--the side Matthew Arnold was so

anxious to keep--and the mere theological framework, always smelling of unreality and always in need of renovation. The poem may stand as a warning against confusing real poetry--in whose truth we need not be afraid to trust because its author does not inhabit our own thought world--with versified theology. If all of Mrs. Meynell's work were like her *_Messina, 1908_*, then the critic and reader who now mistakenly shun her would be right. And the poem is a curious commentary upon Mr. Eastman's insistence that poetry is realization. For in her other poems the author has presented those aspects of her religion which are verifiable in experience. Perhaps the quotations given above bear out that point. But one aspect of religious thought has now been pretty generally abandoned, not because it has ever been proven false, but because we have never succeeded in realizing it for ourselves. The God of orthodox church theodicy never did "make good"; Christ, the Saints, and even the very material form of the cross itself had to mediate between man and the divine. And it is precisely in the one case in this book where Mrs. Meynell tries to present the governing rather than the immanent God to us that she fails--as, if poetry be realization, we should expect her to fail. The first stanza of the poem addressed to the Deity describes in a few bold strokes the wreck of Messina, and ends with the lines:

*Destroyer, we have cowered beneath Thine own
Immediate unintelligible hand.*

The second stanza describes the missions of mercy to the stricken city, and ends:

*... our shattered fingers feel
Thy mediate and intelligible hand.*

The essential weakness of this dependence for poetic effect upon the two adjectives and their negatives is no less obvious than the weakness of the poet's attribution of such apparently impulsive and then retractatory conduct to a God whose ways must either be explicable in terms of a human sense of order or not made the subject of human discourse at all.

Mrs. Meynell describes herself in one of these poems as a singer of a single mood. Some of her critics have taken her at her word and saved themselves some trouble thereby in their task of appreciation. But as a matter of fact, she should not be taken at her own modest estimate, for her one mood is such a pervasive one, such a large and sane mood, that it pays to look at more than one aspect of life through its coloring. And in truth, besides her better-known poems which need no further mention here, *_The Lady Poverty_* and *_Renouncement_*, for example, there will be found within the small compass of her beautifully-housed collection of verse many aspects of nature, all of them instinct with a mystic shimmer of life, as well as aspects of the innermost life of man

which it is given to few spirits to sing in words--only, in fact, to those spirits whose effort it is to make their poetry

*Plain, behind oracles ... and past
All symbols, simple; perfect, heavenly-wild,
The song some loaded poets reach at last--
The kings that found a Child.*

To have the sense of creative activity is the great happiness and the great proof of being alive, and it is not denied to criticism to have it; but then criticism must be sincere, simple, flexible, ardent, ever widening its knowledge.--

Matthew Arnold in *Essays in Criticism* (First Series).

Chloroform

Mary Aldis And Arthur Davison Ficke

*A sickening odour, treacherously sweet,
Steals through my sense heavily.
Above me leans an ominous shape,
Fearful, white-robed, hooded and masked in white.
The pits of his eyes
Peer like the port-holes of an armoured ship,
Merciless, keen, inhuman, dark.
The hands alone are of my kindred;
Their slender strength, that soon shall press the knife
Silver and red, now lingers slowly above me,
The last links with my human world ...*

*... The living daylight
Clouds and thickens.
Flashes of sudden clearness stream before me,--and then
A menacing wave of darkness
Swallows the glow with floods of vast and indeterminate grey.
But in the flashes
I see the white form towering,
Dim, ominous,
Like some apostate monk whose will unholy
Has renounced God; and now
In this most awful secret laboratory
Would wring from matter
Its stark and appalling answer.*

*At the gates of a bitter hell he stands, to wrest with eager fierceness
More of that dark forbidden knowledge
Wherefrom his soul draws fervor to deny.*

*The clouds have grown thicker; they sway around me
Dizzying, terrible, gigantic, pressing in upon me
Like a thousand monsters of the deep with formless arms.
I cannot push them back, I cannot!
From far, far off, a voice I knew long ago
Sounds faintly thin and clear.
Suddenly in a desperate rebellion I strive to answer,--
I strive to call aloud.--
But darkness chokes and overcomes me:
None may hear my soundless cry.
A depth abysmal opens
And receives, enfolds, engulfs me,--
Wherein to sink at last seems blissful
Even though to deeper pain....*

*O respite and peace of deliverance!
The silence
Lies over me like a benediction.
As in the earth's first pale creation-morn
Among winds and waters holy
I am borne as I longed to be borne.
I am adrift in the depths of an ocean grey
Like seaweed, desiring solely
To drift with the winds and waters; I sway
Into their vast slow movements; all the shores
Of being are laved by my tides.
I am drawn out toward spaces wonderful and holy
Where peace abides,
And into golden aeons far away.*

*But over me
Where I swing slowly
Bodiless in the bodiless sea,
Very far,
Oh very far away,
Glimmeringly
Hangs a ghostly star
Toward whose pure beam I must flow resistlessly.
Well do I know its ray!
It is the light beyond the worlds of space,
By groping sorrowing man yet never known--
The goal where all men's blind and yearning desire
Has vainly longed to go
And has not gone:--
Where Eternity has its blue-walled dwelling-place,*

*And the crystal ether opens endlessly
To all the recessed corners of the world,
Like liquid fire
Pouring a flood through the dimness revealingly;
Where my soul shall behold, and in lightness of wonder rise higher
Out of the shadow that long ago
Around me with mortality was furled.*

*I rise where have winds
Of the night never flown;
Shaken with rapture
Is the vault of desire.
The weakness that binds
Like a shadow is gone.
The bonds of my capture
Are sundered with fire!*

*This is the hour
When the wonders open!
The lightning-winged spaces
Through which I fly
Accept me, a power
Whose prisons are broken--*

* * * *

*... But the wonder wavers--
The light goes out.
I am in the void no more; changes are imminent.
Time with a million beating wings
Deafens the air in migratory flight
Like the roar of seas--and is gone ...
And a silence
Lasts deafeningly.
In darkness and perfect silence
I wander groping in my agony,
Far from the light lost in the upper ether--
Unknown, unknowable, so nearly mine.
And the ages pass by me,
Thousands each instant, yet I feel them all
To the last second of their dragging time.
Thus have I striven always
Since the world began.
And when it dies I still must struggle ...*

* * * *

*The voice I knew so long ago, like a muffled echo under the sea
Is coming nearer.*

*Strong hands
Grip mine.
And words whose tones are warm with some forgotten consolation,
Some unintelligible hope,
Drag me upward in horrible mercy;
And the cold once-familiar daylight glares into my eyes.*

*He stands there,
The white apostate monk,
Speaking low lying words to soothe me.
And I lift my voice out of its vales of agony
And laugh in his face,
Mocking him with astonishment of wonder.
For he has denied;
And I have come so near, so near to knowing ...*

*Then as his hand touches me gently, I am drawn up from the
lonely abysses,
And suffer him to lead me back into the green valleys of the living.*

Impression

George Soule

*Her life was late a new-built house--
Empty, with shining window panes,
Where neither sorrow nor carouse
Had left red stains.*

*A passing vagrant, least of men,
Entered and used; her hearth-fire shone.
She mellowed, he grew restless then--
Left her alone.*

*Now she is vacant as before,
Desolate through the weary while;
Yet play about the darkened door
Shadows of smiles.*

Patriots

Parke Farley

ON THE "7:50"

*As you go in and out upon the train,
You're always reading poetry?*

*... Yes.
At first it slightly did embarrass me
To have the people stare,
Like you, over my shoulder,
Catching, as it were, a sudden flashing thigh,
Or gleam of sunlight on a truth laid bare,
Then sizing me up from the tail of the eye.
I used to shield the books, and myself, too,
But now I have grown bolder--I don't care ...
They say this morning train from Lake Forest to Chicago
Carries more money, more living money
Than any train of its length and size in the world.
There's the Club car, for Bridge, and then the Smoker,
And four or five other coaches.
It makes one feel rich merely to ride upon it ...*

*No, it's not Keats or Shelley--yes, well enough,
But these are living.
I like them young and strenuous,
And when I find one that has done with lies,
I send a word ...*

The Project Gutenberg EBook of The Little Review, June 1914 (Vol. 1, No. 4), by Margaret C. Anderson

A Kaleidoscope

Nicholas Vachel Lindsay

Blanche Sweet--Moving-Picture Actress

[After seeing the reel called Oil and Water.]

*Beauty has a throne-room
In our humorous town,
Spoiling its hobgoblins,
Laughing shadows down.
Dour musicians torture
Rag-time ballads vile,
But we walk serenely
Down the odorous aisle.
We forgive the squalor,
And the boom and squeal,
For the Great Queen flashes
From the moving reel.*

*Just a prim blonde stranger
In her early day,
Hiding brilliant weapons,
Too averse to play;
Then she burst upon us
Dancing through the night,
Oh, her maiden radiance,
Veils and roses white!
With new powers, yet cautious,
Not too smart or skilled,
That first flash of dancing
Wrought the thing she willed:--
Mobs of us made noble
By her strong desire,
By her white, uplifting
Royal romance-fire.
Though the tin piano
Snarls its tango rude,
Though the chairs are shaky
And the drama's crude,
Solemn are her motions,
Stately are her wiles,
Filling oafs with wisdom,*

*Saving souls with smiles;
Mid the restless actors
She is rich and slow,
She will stand like marble,
She will pause and glow,
Though the film is twitching
Keep a peaceful reign,
Ruler of her passion,
Ruler of our pain!*

Girl, You Shall Mock No Longer

*You shall not hide forever,
I shall your path discern;
I have the key to Heaven,
Key to the pits that burn.*

*Saved ones will help me, lost ones
Spy on your secret way--
Show me your flying footprints
On past your death-bed day.*

*If by your pride you stumble
Down to the demon-land,
I shall be there beside you,
Chained to your burning hand.*

*If, by your choice and pleasure,
You shall ascend the sky,
I, too, will mount that stairway,
You shall not put me by.*

*There, 'mid the holy people,
Healed of your blasting scorn,
Clasped in these arms that hunger,
Splendid with dreams reborn,*

*You shall be mastered, lady,
Knowing, at last, Desire--
Lifting your face for kisses--
Kisses of bitter fire.*

The Amaranth

*Ah, in the night, all music haunts me here ...
Is it for naught high Heaven cracks and yawns
And the tremendous amaranth descends*

Sweet with glory of ten thousand dawns?

*Does it not mean my God would have me say:--
"Whether you will or no, oh city young
Heaven will bloom like one great flower for you,
Flash and loom greatly, all your marts among?"*

*Friends I will not cease hoping, though you weep.
Such things I see, and some of them shall come
Though now our streets are harsh and ashen-grey,
Though now our youths are strident, or are dumb.*

*Friends, that sweet town, that wonder-town shall rise.
Naught can delay it. Though it may not be
Just as I dream, it comes at last, I know
With streets like channels of an incense-sea!*

An Argument

I. The voice of the man who is impatient with visions and Utopias.

*We find your soft Utopias as white
As new-cut bread, as dull as life in cells,
Oh scribes that dare forget how wild we are,
How human breasts adore alarum bells.*

*You house us in a hive of prigs and saints
Communal, frugal, clean, and chaste by law.
I'd rather brood in bloody Elsinore
Or be Lear's fool, straw-crowned amid the straw.*

*Promise us all our share in Agincourt.
Say that our clerks shall venture scorns and death.
That future ant-hills will not be too good
For Henry Fifth, or Hotspur, or Macbeth.*

*Promise that through tomorrow's spirit-war
Man's deathless soul will hack and hew its way,
Each flaunting Cæsar climbing to his fate
Scorning the utmost steps of yesterday.*

*And never a shallow jester any more.
Let not Jack Falstaff spill the ale in vain.
Let Touchstone set the fashions for the wise,
And Ariel wreak his fancies through the rain!*

II. The Rhymer's reply. Incense and Splendor.

*Incense and splendor haunt me as I go.
Though my good works have been, alas, too few,
Though I do naught, High Heaven comes down to me
And future ages pass in tall review.*

*I see the years to come as armies vast,
Stalking tremendous through the fields of time.
Man is unborn. Tomorrow he is born
Flamelike to hover o'er the moil and grime;*

*Striving, aspiring till the shame is gone,
Sowing a million flowers where now we mourn--
Laying new precious pavements with a song,
Founding new shrines, the good streets to adorn.*

*I have seen lovers by those new-built walls
Clothed like the dawn, in orange, gold, and red;
Eyes flashing forth the glory-light of love
Under the wreaths that crowned each royal head.*

*Life was made greater by their sweetheart prayers;
Passion was turned to civic strength that day--
Piling the marbles, making fairer domes
With zeal that else had burned bright youth away.*

*I have seen priestesses of life go by
Gliding in Samite through the incense-sea:--
Innocent children marching with them there,
Singing in flowered robes--"the Earth is free!"*

*While on the fair deep-carved, unfinished towers
Sentinels watched in armor night and day--
Guarding the brazier-fires of hope and dream--
Wild was their peace, and dawn-bright their array!*

Darling Daughter of Babylon

*Too soon you wearied of our tears.
And then you danced with spangled feet,
Leading Belshazzar's chattering court
A-tinkling through the shadowy street.
With mead they came, with chants of shame,
Desire's red flag before them flew.
And Istar's music moved your mouth
And Baal's deep shames rewoke in you.*

*Now you could drive the royal car:
Forget our Nation's breaking load:--
Now you could sleep on silver beds--
(Bitter and dark was our abode).
And so for many a night you laughed
And knew not of my hopeless prayer;
Till God's own spirit whipped you forth
From Istar's shrine, from Istar's stair.*

*Darling daughter of Babylon--
Rose by the black Euphrates flood--
Again your beauty grew more dear
Than my slave's bread, than my heart's blood.
We sang of Zion, good to know,
Where righteousness and peace abide ...
What of your second sacrilege
Carousing at Belshazzar's side?*

*Once, by a stream, we clasped tired hands--
Your paint and henna washed away.
Your place (you said) was with the slaves
Who sewed the thick cloth, night and day.
You were a pale and holy maid
Toil-bound with us. One night you said:--
"Your God shall be my God until
I slumber with the patriarch dead."*

*Pardon, daughter of Babylon,
If, on this night remembering
Our lover walks under the walls
Of hanging gardens in the spring--
A venom comes, from broken hope--
From memories of your comrade-song,
Until I curse your painted eyes
And do your flower-mouth too much wrong.*

I Went Down Into the Desert

*I went down into the desert
To meet Elijah--
Or some one like, arisen from the dead.
I thought to find him in an echoing cave,
For so my dream had said.*

*I went down into the desert
To meet John the Baptist.
I walked with feet that bled,*

*Seeking that prophet, lean and brown and bold.
I spied foul fiends instead.*

*I went down into the desert
To meet my God,
By Him be comforted.
I went down into the desert
To meet my God
And I met the Devil in Red.*

*I went down into the desert
To meet my God.
Oh Lord, my God, awaken from the dead!
I see you there, your thorn-crown on the ground--
I see you there, half-buried in the sand--
I see you there, your white bones glistening, bare,
The carrion birds a-wheeling round your head!*

Encountered on the Streets of the City

THE CHURCH OF VISION AND DREAM

*Is it for naught that where the tired crowds see
Only a place for trade, a teeming square,
Doors of high portent open unto me
Carved with great eagles, and with Hawthorns rare?*

*Doors I proclaim, for there are rooms forgot
Ripened through æons by the good and wise:
Walls set with Art's own pearl and amethyst
Angel-wrought hangings there, and heaven-hued dyes:--*

*Dazzling the eye of faith, the hope-filled heart:--
Rooms rich in records of old deeds sublime:
Books that hold garnered harvests of far lands
Pictures that tableau Man's triumphant climb:*

*Statues so white, so counterfeiting life,
Bronze so ennobled, so with glory fraught
That the tired eyes must weep with joy to see,
And the tired mind in Beauty's net be caught.*

*Come, enter there, and meet Tomorrow's Man,
Communing with him softly, day by day.
Ah, the deep vistas he reveals, the dream
Of Angel-bands in infinite array--*

Bright angel-bands that dance in paths of earth

*When our despairs are gone, long overpast--
When men and maidens give fair hearts to Christ
And white streets flame in righteous peace at last!*

The Stubborn Mouse

*The mouse that gnawed the oak-tree down
Began his task in early life,
He kept so busy with his teeth
He had no time to take a wife.*

*He gnawed and gnawed through sun and rain,
When the ambitious fit was on,
Then rested in the sawdust till
A month in idleness had gone.*

*He did not move about to hunt
The coteries of mousie-men;
He was a snail-paced stupid thing
Until he cared to gnaw again.*

*The mouse that gnawed the oak-tree down
When that tough foe was at his feet--
Found in the stump no angel-cake
Nor buttered bread, no cheese, nor meat--*

*The forest-roof let in the sky.
"This light is worth the work," said he.
"I'll make this ancient swamp more light"--
And started on another tree!*

The Sword-Pen of the Rhymer

*I'll haunt this town, though gone the maids and men
The darling few, my friends and loves today.
My ghost returns, bearing a great sword-pen
When far off children of their children play.*

*That pen will drip with moonlight and with fire;
I'll write upon the church-doors and the walls;
And reading there, young hearts shall leap the higher
Though drunk already with their own love-calls.*

*Still led of love, and arm in arm, strange gold
Shall find in tracing the far-speeding track
The dauntless war-cries that my sword-pen bold
Shall carve on terraces and tree-trunks black--*

*On tree-trunks black, 'mid orchard-blossoms white--
Just as the phospherent merman, struggling home,
Jewels his fire-paths in the tides at night
While hurrying sea-babes follow through the foam.*

*And, in the winter, when the leaves are dead
And the first snow has carpeted the street,
While young cheeks flush a healthful Christmas red,
And young eyes glisten with youth's fervor sweet--*

*My pen will cut in snow my hopes of yore,
Cries that in channelled glory leap and shine--
My village gospel--living evermore
'Mid those rejoicing loyal friends of mine.*

Gloria Mundi

Eunice Tietjens

*In what dim, half imagined place
Does the Titanic lie to-day,
Too deep for tide, too deep for spray,
In night and saltiness and space?*

*Oh, quiet must the sea-floor be!
And very still must be the gloom
Where in each well-appointed room
The splendor rots unto the sea.*

*Through crannies in the shattered decks
The sea-weed thrusts pale finger-tips,
And in the bottom's jagged rips
With ghostly hands it waves and beck.*

*The mirrors in the great saloons
Sleep darkly in their gilt and brass
Save when the silent fishes pass
With eyes like phosphorescent moons.*

*On painted walls are slimy things,
And strange sea creatures, lithe and cool,
Spawn in the marble swimming pool
And shall, a thousand springs.*

*For as it is, so it shall be,
Untouched of time till Doom appears,
Too deep for days, too deep for years
In the salt quiet of the sea.*

Keats and Fanny Brawne

By Charlotte Wilson

*He tried to pour the torrents of his love
Into a tiny vase; a trinket--smooth,
Pretty enough--but fit to hold a rose
Upon some shrewd collector's cabinet.
Toward that small moon the wild tides of his love
Reared up, and fell back, moaning; and he died
Asking his heart why love was agony.*

*And she? She loved the best she could, I think,
And wondered sometimes--but not overmuch--
At poor John's queer, unseemly violence.*

Poetry to the Uttermost

Francis Rolt-Wheeler.

*We are afraid. We are all horribly afraid. The seal of poetic propriety
is laid upon our lips, the burden of tradition bows us down. Crouched
and abject beneath the dominance of the slave-driver, gap-toothed
Custom, we set our shoulders to the toil--the useless toil--of dragging
through the mile-years of simoom-whipped sand the impassive statue of
Mediocrity.*

*What, if the vulture scream above us, can we dare to tell the meaning of
its cry? Sharp will descend the whip of circumstance to warn that
otherwhere the nightingales are singing under a full-orbed moon and we
must sing of them.*

*Does an all-reckless slave defy his Maker with a thunderbolt of
blasphemy, forged in the furnace of his agony? Straight comes the
penalty decreeing silence and neglect unless we chant apocalyptic
anodynes.*

If the challenge of the blood outbeats the clanging of the bonds and in the glowing dusk man and woman cling to each other until the uttermost is won, shall this be told in paeon and in song? Not unless social usage has been satisfied and it be ascertained that desire has given place to design, that love has been exchanged for lucre, and that marriage has been substituted for mating; then are we bidden cull from the common-casket of permitted phrases the veil, the orange-flower wreath, and all the weary paraphernalia of convention, and write an epithalamium to the plaudits of the admiring throng.

Rituals began in poetry. And since all rituals today have lost most of their ancient power, serving to soothe and charm instead of to stir and challenge, we look to the poetry of today to lay the web whereon the rituals of the future shall be spun. Let not that web possess one strand of mediocrity. Platitudinizing is no pattern for the future. If we are fain to cry aloud, let our throats crack thereat; if we would hurl defiance, let us not fear to charge after our javelins and find our freedom in the breach ourselves have made.

*Every true poet has the uttermost within, if he or she will but give it voice. Oh, poets of every craft, give of the uttermost! Better a single cry like *The Ballad of Reading Gaol*, like *Bianca*, like *When I am dead* and sister to the dust--to touch on a few moderns only--than a lumber-loft of pretty and tuneful voicings of the themes that please but do not satisfy. There are those of us who read whose blood runs hot and red as well as yours. Dare, O you poets of every craft! Rise to the cry! Your hearts are high and full of gallantry, the world is waiting to be led by you to heights before unscaled. Shake cowardice away and dare!*

To William Butler Yeats

Marguerite O. B. Wilkinson

*As one, who, wandering down a squalid street,
Where dingy buildings crowd each other high,
Where all who pass have need to hurry by,
Saddened and parched and fighting through the heat,
Comes suddenly where pain and beauty meet,
And sees a stretch of fair, unsullied sky,
Covering a field of clover bloom, so I,
With heart prepared to find the contrast sweet
In seeking through a world of sordid prose,
Where use-stained words with huddled shoulders stand*

*In sullen, monumental, loveless rows,
Have found a sudden green and sunny land
Where you, O Poet, give us back lost wonder,
Leisure, sweet fields, clean skies to travel under!*

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Beyond Good And Evil

Charles Ashleigh

(_A Mystery Rime for Little Children of All Ages _)

*The rain comes down and veils the hills.
Ah, tender rain for aching fields!*

*The hills are clothed in a mist of rain.
(My heart is clothed in a mist of pain.)
Ah, mother rain, that laves the field,
If I to you my poor soul yield,
Will you not cleanse it, soothe it, tend it,
Weep upon it 'til 'tis mended?
'Twas sweet to sow, 'tis hard to reap.
Come, mother rain, and lull me to sleep.
Lull me to sleep and wash me away,
Out of the realm of Night and Day,
Back to the bourne from whence I came,
Seeming alike yet not the same....*

*Rain, you are more than rain to me.
And Lash of Pain may be a Key.
Ope, then, the door and tread within.
The double Door of Good and Sin
Is vanquished. Lo, with bread and wine,
The table's spread! The feast is Mine!*

LOVE IN THE ABYSS

*Amidst the buzz of bawdy tales
And the laughter of drinking men,
I sat and laughed and shouted also.
Yet was I not content.*

*My seared and restless eyes, turning here and there,--
Like my tired soul,--
Seeking new joys and finding them not,--
How oft swept you unseeing.*

*Until, suddenly,--
And now I know not how I could have missed it,--
My eyes saw into yours,
And plumbed the deep wells of newly born desire.*

*Ah, dear my heart, what things your eyes did speak!
Not God's own music of creation's dawn,
Revealed to mystic in a holy trance,
Could pleasure me more sweetly.*

*So dear were your lips--
Your lips so kind and regal red.
My memory of your lips I cherish
As a great possession ...*

*Ah, flying joy,
Caught on the wings of Time ...
Tender oasis,
Ingemmed in a wilderness of grey!*

*Kisses, kisses,--
Kisses upon your red lips in the black night ...*

*When, alone in the long, quiet street,
By the door of the tavern,
Shielded from sight of those within,
The soft rain falling on our heads like a mother's blessing,--
We bartered the clinging kisses of new desire.
And, as I held you to me,
The whole universe
Became informed of God,
And lay within my arms.*

JEALOUSY

*You are possessed by another.
How I hate him!*

*Hear the rational people say: "Jealousy is a primitive thing. A
thing of the emotions; not of reason."
Fools! You do not know scarlet desire, full-flooded!*

Ah, my dearest, Graal of my heart's longing,

*Your stolen kiss is fresh upon my neck.
My lips are full of my secret kiss upon your neck.*

*You are with another, whom I hate; whom I like well for himself, but
hate because he possesses you ...*

*Your possessor is old and ugly;
He can not love you as I can.
I can pour out for you the scented treasures of my young love.*

*Dear night of hope, when you gave me the whispered promise to come
to me ...*

*Stealthy was I and cunning.
Friendly and attentive was I to your old lover (if lover he may be
called, who is almost incapable of love).
And, all the time, I was scheming for you.
When the old man was away for an instant--
Oh, golden moment,--
I poured my whispered passion into your ears.
When he looked away, or, for a moment, was distracted, with swift
undertones I declared myself to you.
How dear was your welcoming glance and your quickly toned assent!
You had a face so proud.
So quiet and poised among the throng.
Yet, for once, you gave me your eyes and, in so doing, gave me your
priceless body and warm, comradely soul.
Ah, flash of answering love that transformed your face!
As a jewel of my memory's treasure-casket may it be preserved.*

*When the drinking-place was closed, we walked along the dark street.
Do you remember?
We were four, luckily, and the old man was kept busy in conversation,
half drunken as he was.*

*And we, with our secret between us, walked behind.
Our hands were tight clasped in the folds of our dress.
Tight clasped with the clinging hand caress; you and I trying to put
into our hands all the longing that was in us.
All the time we were apprehensive of a sudden turning of the old man or
the other ...*

Then, the whispered troth, and the meeting-place appointed.

*And, then, later, boldly, so openly and audaciously it brought no
suspicion,
Under seeming of wine-induced jollity, we kissed.
And they laughed; it seemed a trivial jest to them.
But to us it was a sacrament.*

*But, best of all, my beloved, was the hurried clasping and kissing
when we were alone in the dark.
Promise of joy to come.
Foretaste of the coming ecstasy.*

*And then we had to part.
I and my unaware friend.
You and the old man.*

*As I walked home that night,
How I hated him!
How I looked up at the pale-golden moon high-hung in the purple sky, and
sang in my heart your praise and cursed in my heart your
possessor ...*

But we will out-wit him.

*Young I am and young are you and the Law of Life bids us mate.
And a whole world standing between us would be melted and destroyed by
the fire of our youth's desire.*

THE GLORIOUS ADVENTURE OF GLORIOUS ME

*I swim with the tide of life towards the new;
I reach out hungered arms to flowing change.--
I smash the awesome totems of my kind;
My smarting vision bursts its cramping range.*

*A thousand voices yell within my soul;
A thousand hymns are chanting in my heart.--
I blast the mist of worlds and years apart;
I sense the blending glory of the whole.*

*The sap of flowers and trees, it mounts in me.
I feel the child within me cry and turn;
The crimson thoughts within me writhe and burn.--
I stand, with craving arms high-flung, before the rimless sea.*

*And every whirling, passionate star sings melodies to Me;
And every bud and every leaf has sought my private ear;
And to the quickening soul of Me has told its mystery,
As I sit in state in the heart of the world,
As I proudly hug the core of the world,
As I make me a boat of the whole, wide world ...*

And then for new worlds steer.

The Swan

F. S. Flint.

*Under the lily shadow
and the gold
and the blue and mauve
that the whin and the lilac
pour down on the water,
the fishes quiver.*

*Over the green cold leaves
and the rippled silver
and the tarnished copper
of its neck and beak,
toward the deep black water
beneath the arches,
the swan floats slowly.*

*Into the dark of the arch the swan floats
and into the black depth of my sorrow
it bears a white rose of flame.*

Of Rupert Brooke And Other Matters

Arthur Davison Ficke

Since even to poets--and poets are erroneously supposed to sing their hearts out--there remains a certain right of privacy, I am not sure that we do well in writing so much of their personalities and their individual views of life. When we read a poem, we feel a temperament behind it; but the effort to catalogue and label that mind and its "message" is a little impertinent, and very futile. Mr. Rupert Brooke is an excellent illustration. His fondness for this or that--whether in landscape, food, ideas, or morals--is hardly our concern. He deserves to be treated not as a natural-history specimen,--a peculiar group of likes and dislikes and convictions,--but as an artist.

Mr. Brooke has the distinction, rare for a young poet, of not having written any bad verse, or of not having printed it. His sole volume,

Poems (Sidgwick and Jackson, London, 1913), manifests in even its least notable pieces a creative spirit not allowed to run riot, but chastened and restrained by a keen sense of the obscure laws whose workings turn passion into a decorative pattern, and the emotions of the blood into intelligible designs.

Unless one is deeply concerned with such things, one is not likely to recognize the fundamental difference between those poets whose work is merely a more or less interesting emotional cry, and those nobler and more mature poets in whose work the crude elements of emotion are subordinated to the exigencies of an artistic conception. Only the latter have written fine poetry. The former may move us, as a crying child may move us; but they cannot exalt us to a peak that rises above the region of mere sympathetic response. They can never bring us a wind of revelation, or a flame from beyond the world. They are never the poets to whom other poets--and these are the only final judges--turn for inspiration or for fellowship.

For after all, there is no magic in any theme or in the emotion behind it; what is magical lies wholly in the design, the mould, in which the poet embodies a feeling that is probably common to all. No thought is so profound, no intimation so subtle, that it alone suffices as the stuff of poetry. But any thought, any intimation, if it be justly correlated and moulded into an organic and expressive shape, will serve to awaken echoes of a forgotten or unknown loveliness, and pierce its way into the very soul of the listener.

This sense of design of which I speak is not a hard, formal, conscious thing in the mind of the poet; but rather a carefully trained instinct, like the instinct that guides the hand of a fine draughtsman in the drawing of a curve of unexpected beauty. There is a right place to begin the curve, and a right place to end it; and at every instant of its length it is swayed and governed by a sense of relation to preceding and succeeding moments,--a sense subject to laws that defy mathematical formulation, but are perilously definite nevertheless. This sense of control is a rare thing to find in the work of so young a man as Mr. Brooke. Most young writers seem to approach their work as an unrestrained expression of themselves,--which it should be: but they forget that, for real self-expression, the most scrupulous mastery of the medium of expression is necessary. They regard the writing of verse as something in the nature of a joy-ride with an open throttle,--instead of seeing in it a piece of difficult driving, to be achieved only by the use of every subtlety of modulated speed and controlled steering that the mind is capable of employing.

That Mr. Brooke needs no such warning, let the following fine sonnet bear witness:

SUCCESS

*I think if you had loved me when I wanted;
If I'd looked up one day, and seen your eyes,
And found my wild sick blasphemous prayer granted,
And your brown face, that's full of pity and wise,
Flushed suddenly; the white godhead in new fear
Intollerably so struggling, and so shamed;
Most holy and far, if you'd come all too near;
If earth had seen Earth's lordliest wild limbs tamed,
Shaken, and trapped, and shivering, for my touch--
Myself should I have slain? or that foul you?
But this the strange gods, who had given so much,
To have seen and known you, this they might not do.
One last shame's spared me, one black word's unspoken;
And I'm alone; and you have not awoken.*

It is significant that for his sonnets Mr. Brooke frequently chooses the Shakesperian form,--a form which, strangely, English poets have generally for at least a century discarded in favor of the Petrarchan model. The common feeling appears to be that the Petrarchan (a-b-b-a, a-b-b-a, c-d-e-c-d-e or some variation on that scheme) is musical and emotional; and that the Shakesperian (a-b-a-b, c-d-c-d, e-f-e-f, g-g) is harsh, cold, mechanical, and incapable of subtle harmonies. The exact reverse of this is the case. It is perhaps too much to ask the reader to write a sequence of a hundred sonnets in each form, as a test; but I am confident that after such an experience, he would agree with me. The Petrarchan form is capable of only one successful effect; a rising on the crest of a wave, whose summit is the end of the eighth line; and a subsidence of the wave, in the course of the last six lines. The Shakesperian form, on the other hand, is capable of a literally infinite variety of effects: no pattern is set arbitrarily in advance, but, as in blank verse, any pattern may be created. The first twelve lines--which are nothing but three quatrains--can be moulded into a contour that fits any shape or size of thought whatsoever; and the couplet at the end--a device despised by the ignorant--may be used either to clinch the purport of the preceding twelve lines, or to blend with them, or startlingly to refute them, or to serve any other end that the genius of the writer is capable of imagining. The mere novice will like this form because of its simple rhyme-scheme and its superficial ease of working; the experienced amateur will prefer the Petrarchan form because, while the more complex rhyme-scheme presents for him no difficulties, the basic inadequacies of his thought-structure are fairly well concealed by the arbitrary sonnet-structure; but the master of imagination and expression is likely to follow Shakespeare and the novice in preferring the true English form, wherein he can with perfect freedom create a subtly modulated movement that will answer to every sway and leap of his thought. Mr. Brooke, whose sense of form is keen, is one of those who can safely and wisely try the more interesting and more dangerous

medium.

I have thought it worth while to talk a good deal of the sonnet in connection with Mr. Brooke for the reason that several of his very finest pieces are in this form. The following is one that stands a good chance of being in the anthologies a hundred years from now:

THE HILL

*Breathless, we flung us on the windy hill,
Laughed in the sun, and kissed the lovely grass.
You said, "Through glory and ecstasy we pass;
Wind, sun, and earth remain, the birds sing still,
When we are old, are old ..." "And when we die
All's over that is ours; and life burns on
Through other lovers, other lips," said I,
"Heart of my heart, our heaven is now, is won!"*

*"We are Earth's best, that learnt her lesson here.
Life is our cry. We have kept the faith!" we said;
"We shall go down with unreluctant tread
Rose-crowned into the darkness!" ... Proud we were,
And laughed, that had such brave, true things to say.
--And then you suddenly cried, and turned away.*

Perhaps as magical as any of Mr. Brooke's work is a longer poem called The Fish,--a remarkable and original piece of fantasy that makes the sub-aqueous universe vivid and real to the senses of the reader, and opens to him a new world of imaginative experience. Even the opening lines will serve to indicate something of the curious trance-quality:

*In a cool curving world he lies
And ripples with dark ecstasies.
The kind luxurious lapse and steal
Shapes all his universe to feel
And know and be; the clinging stream
Closes his memory, glooms his dream,
Who lips the roots o' the shore, and glides
Superb on unreturning tides ...*

In other of these poems, one is struck by Mr. Brooke's passion for ugliness. He loves to take the most hideous and base facts of life and give them a place in his work alongside the things of beauty. It would be hard to find anything more humorous and at the same time more repulsive than this:

WAGNER

*Creeps in half wanton, half asleep,
One with a fat wide hairless face.
He likes love music that is cheap;
Likes women in a crowded place;
And wants to hear the noise they're making.*

*His heavy eyelids droop half-over,
Great pouches swing beneath his eyes.
He listens, thinks himself the lover;
Heaves from his stomach wheezy sighs;
He likes to feel his heart's a-breaking.*

*The music swells. His gross legs quiver.
His little lips are bright with slime.
The music swells. The women shiver,
And all the while, in perfect time
His pendulous stomach hangs a-shaking.*

Now, a passion for ugliness like this is really a revolt against ugliness,--not the tender-skinned aesthete's revolt, which consists in denying ugliness and escaping into a remote dream, but the strong man's, the poet's,--the revolt that is in effect a seizing of ugliness in all its repulsiveness and giving it a reason for existence by embodying it in a chosen pattern that is beautiful. By this method the poet masters emotion, even unpleasant emotion, making it subservient to a decorative design dictated by his own sense of proportion. It is thus that he is able to endure the world of actualities, and to find it comparable in interest with the world of his own thoughts. And by this process he saves himself from the sharpest bite of evil. For there is a curious consolation in transforming a spontaneous cry into a calculated work of art. By such a process one can give, to elements that before seemed only parts of a torturing chaos, their ordered places in a known scheme. One can impose propitious form upon one's recollections, and create a little world of design-relations where the poignancy of experience is lost in the discipline of beauty. It is for this reason that the poet must be considered, in spite of everything, the happiest of men.

The Milliner

Sade Iverson

*All the day long I have been sitting in my shop
Sewing straw on hat-shapes according to the fashion,
Putting lace and ribbon on according to the fashion,
Setting out the faces of customers according to fashion.
Whatever they asked for I tried to give them;
Over their worldly faces I put mimic flowers
From out my silk and velvet garden; I bade Spring come
To those who had seen Autumn; I coaxed faded eyes
To look bright and hard brows to soften.*

*Not once, while they were looking in the glass,
Did I peep over their shoulders to see myself.
It would have been quite unavailing for me,
Who have grown grey in service of other women,
To have used myself as any sort of a model.
Had I looked in the mirror I should have seen
Only a bleached face, long housed from sunshine,
A mouth quick with forced smiles, eyes greyly stagnant,
And over all, like a night fog creeping,
Something chill and obscuring and dead--
The miasmatic mist of the soul of the lonely.*

*When night comes and the buyers are gone their ways,
I go into the little room behind my shop.
It is my home--my silent and lonely home;
But it has fire, it has food; there is a bed;
Pictures are on the walls, showing the faces
I kissed in girlhood. I am myself here;
All my forced smiles are laid away with the moline
And the ribbon and roses. I may do as I please.
If I beat with my fists on the table, no one hears;
If I lie in my bed, staring, staring,
No one can know; I shall not suffer the pity
Of those who, passing, see my light edge the grey curtain.*

*One night, long ago, merely for madness
I stripped myself like a dancing girl;
I draped myself with rose-hued silks
And set a crimson feather in my hair.
There were twists of gold lace about my arms
And a girdle of gold about my waist.
I danced before the mirror till I dropped!
(Outside I could hear the rain falling
And the wind crept in beneath my door*

Along my worn carpet.)

*I folded my finery
And prayed as if kneeling beside my mother.
Whether there was listening I cannot say.
There was praying! There was praying!
Never again shall I dance before the mirror
Bedizened like a dancing girl--never, my mother!*

*I have a low voice and quiet movements,
And early and late I study to please.
As long as I live I shall be adorning other women,
I shall be decking them for their lovers
And sending them upon women's adventures.
But none of them shall see behind this curtain
Where I have my little home, where I weep
When I please, and beat upon the table with my fists.*

In A Garden

Amy Lowell

*Gushing from the mouths of stone men
To spread at ease under the sky
In granite-lipped basins,
Where iris dabble their feet
And rustle to a passing wind,
The water fills the garden with its rushing,
In the midst of the quiet of close-clipped lawns.*

*Damp smell the ferns in tunnels of stone,
Where trickle and splash the fountains,
Marble fountains, yellowed with much water.*

*Splashing down moss-tarnished steps
It falls, the water;
And the air is throbbing with it;
With its gurgling and running;
With its leaping, and deep, cool murmur.*

*And I wished for night and you.
I wanted to see you in the swimming-pool,
White and shining in the silver-flecked water.
While the moon rode over the garden
High in the arch of night,*

And the scent of the lilacs was heavy with stillness.

Night and the water, and you in your whiteness, bathing!

Au Vieux Jardin

Richard Aldington.

*I have sat here happy in the gardens,
Watching the still pool and the reeds
And the dark clouds
Which the wind of the upper air
Tore like the green leafy bough
Of the divers-hued trees of late summer;
But though I greatly delight
In these and the water lilies,
That which sets me nighest to weeping
Is the rose and white colour of the smooth flag-stones,
And the pale yellow grasses
Among them.*

Ts'ai Chi'h

Ezra Pound

*The petals fall in the fountain,
the orange coloured rose-leaves,
Their ochre clings to the stone.*

Liu Ch'e

Ezra Pound.

*The rustling of the silk is discontinued,
Dust drifts over the courtyard,
There is no sound of footfall, and the leaves
Scurry into heaps and lie still,
And she the rejoicer of the heart is beneath them.*

A wet leaf that clings to the threshold.

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Poems

MAXWELL BODENHEIM

After Feeling Deux Arabesques by Debussy

*I stuffed my ears with faded stars
From the little universe of music pent in me,
For your fiendish ripple must be heard but once:
Passing twice through ears, it looses
Its thin divine kinkiness....
I felt it undulate my soul--
Lavender water, pitted and heaved to huge, uneasy circles.*

Let Me Not Live Too Long

*Never will my crumbling tongue hug the drying sides of the basin,
Slaying the last, delicate drops.
Fire have I tasted;
It has flicked me but never burnt--
I shall leave it before it breaks into me.
One flame will I wrap about my browned skin--a deed accomplished--
To speak to me on the way.
Then will I go quickly, lest the other fire-beings scorch my slow feet.*

To the Violinist

*(_Mr. Bodenheim writes of the violinist described in our last
issue. _)*

*Pits a trillion times blacker than black,
Fringed with little black grasses, each holding
The jerking, smoldering ghost of a thought.*

(O deep-aged pupils and lashes!)
At the bottom of the pits lay the phosphorescent bones,
Of many souls that have cried and died.
I think you clutched one of your soul-bones with irreverent hands,
And struck your cringing violin.

Gifts

A dwindling gift are you, laughter.
Old men have I seen, counterfeiting you on street-corners.
Never shall I join them,
For not in scorn do I laugh, but in praise.
Only with my smiles am I lavish;
A different smile for each thought have I.
(O thousands of smiles waiting for the labor of birth!)
To my death-bed will come the wildest smile:
It will be moon-paint on a colorless house.

Hell

(_A Part of Heaven Overlooked by Ford Madox Hueffer. _)

Heaven and Hell are together.
As we walk home on a street in Heaven, in the evening,
Those in Hell will stalk past us
(For Hell is a condition, not a place)
And when we return at dawn will we still see them--
Men bearing infants born dead,
Kissing the inert purple cheeks;
(For the kiss will be the one punishment of Hell);
Men and women holding the severed heads of those they once spat on.
Before a king kissing the head of his queen will we stop,
To give him a kind word;
Or before an anarchist clasping the head of the king;
Or before a woman carrying the head of the anarchist--
Each unaware of the other's presence.
We will see them walking up and down the streets of Heaven
For countless years,
Till the day when the heads will disappear,
And the head-bearers build homes next to our own.

To a Woman

*Lovers married a thousand years in Heaven
And in that which lies beyond Heaven
(For Heaven is but the first rest of a thirstless journey)
Know not each other as we do.
Knowledge is born of a second:
We had our slim second,
And it will live for millions of years.
Only when it reaches the suburbs of Eternity, will it die.*

Children of War

Eunice Tietjens

*Out of the womb of war we cry to you,
We who have yet to be,
We who lie waiting in the strong loins of time, unformed and hesitant,
We who shall be your sons and your slim daughters.
In the womb of war shall you beget us, and with the seal of the war-god
shall we be sealed;
In ditches shall we be begotten, of lust-crazed soldiers on the
screaming women of the enemy.
Of camp followers and scavengers shall we be conceived, of the weakling
and the sick.
We shall be begotten in secret, stolen meeting of man and wife, drunk
with weariness the man, and blind with terror the woman.
In bitterness of soul shall we be borne, and deeply shall we suck the
pap of hatred. Revenge shall be our daily bread, and with
blood-lust shall we be nourished.
Yea, in our bodies shall we bear the seal of the war-beast.
Our hearts shall be thin and naked as your sword-blades, and our souls
ruthless as your cannon.
And we shall pay--year by year, in our frail bodies and our twisted
souls shall we pay
For your glorious patriotism.
Out of the womb of war we cry to you,
We who have yet to be!*

Poems

AMY LOWELL

Clear, With Light Variable Winds

*The fountain bent and straightened itself
In the night wind,
Blowing like a flower.
It gleamed and glittered,
A tall white lily,
Under the eye of the golden moon.
From a stone seat,
Beneath a blossoming lime,
The man watched it.
And the spray pattered
On the dim grass at his feet.*

*The fountain tossed its water,
Up and up, like silver marbles.
Is that an arm he sees?
And for one moment
Does he catch the moving curve
Of a thigh?
The fountain gurgled and splashed,
And the man's face was wet.*

*Is it singing that he hears?
A song of playing at ball?
The moonlight shines on the straight column of water,
And through it he sees a woman,
Tossing the water-balls.
Her breasts point outwards,
And the nipples are like buds of peonies.
Her flanks ripple as she plays,
And the water is not more undulating
Than the lines of her body.*

*"Come," she sings, "Poet!
Am I not worth more than your day ladies,
Covered with awkward stuffs,
Unreal, unbeautiful?
What do you fear in taking me?
Is not the night for poets?
I am your dream,
Recurrent as water,*

*Gemmed with the moon!"
She steps to the edge of the pool
And the water runs, rustling, down her sides.
She stretches out her arms,
And the fountain streams behind her
Like an opened vail.*

* * * * *

*In the morning the gardeners came to their work.
"There is something in the fountain", said one.
They shuddered as they laid their dead master
On the grass.
"I will close his eyes", said the head gardener,
"It is uncanny to see a dead man staring at the sun."*

* * * * *

Fool's Moneybags

*Outside the long window,
With his head on the stone sill,
The dog is lying,
Gazing at his Beloved.
His eyes are wet and urgent,
And his body is taut and shaking.
It is cold on the terrace;
A pale wind licks along the stone slabs,
But the dog gazes through the glass
And is content.*

*The Beloved is writing a letter.
Occasionally she speaks to the dog,
But she is thinking of her writing.
Does she, too, give her devotion to one
Not worthy?*

The Poetry of Revolt

CHARLES ASHLEIGH

Arrows in the Gale, by Arturo Giovannitti. [Hillacre Bookhouse, Riverside, Connecticut.]

There are many ways in which we can approach this curious and portentous volume. We may confine ourselves solely to the technique of the writing, but, in so doing, we should ignore the most important and compelling part of the book: its spirit. There is something which flames through these poems that abashes one who would content himself with a sterile commentary on the versification; only those who are afraid of life would take refuge in such pedantic air-beating.

In this book there is a combination of two of the most significant personalities of our time. The preface is written by that miracle incarnate: Helen Keller. In it she gives us the background of the poems--a background of tumultuous class-conflict. The awakening of the working-class, and its surprising growth of self-reliance and militancy, is the inspiration of the book, and Helen Keller announces herself for it and with it.

Giovannitti himself is a remarkable man of remarkable antecedents. He emigrated from his native Italy at the age of seventeen, and was precipitated into our whirl of economic struggle. He worked in Pennsylvania in the coal mines and, later, assumed the position which he still holds: that of editor of the Italian revolutionary weekly, *Il Proletario*. In the now famous Lawrence strike he was one of those who were most valuable in stimulating the sense of solidarity among the workers and in maintaining their enthusiasm. Together with Joseph J. Ettor and Caruso, he spent several months in jail, awaiting his trial on a faked-up murder charge. They were acquitted, not so much because of the legal justice of their cause but because of the fact that their condemnation would have resulted in the paralysis of the textile industry. With their threat of general strike the workers forced the courts of their masters to deliver up to them their captive spokesmen. The excitement and publicity resultant from the Lawrence Strike brought into prominence the ideas of Giovannitti and others who were espousers of the Syndicalist idea, which in this country is expressed through the organization known as the Industrial Workers of the World.

It is necessary to have some idea of these matters in order to appreciate the *leit motif* of this book. All through it flares that spirit of impatient revolt, that spurning of most of the scaffolding of our decrepit civilization which is usually held up for admiration to the budding youth of this country. Courts of law, churches, and parliaments

all fall under the blinding fire of the bitter contempt of this workman in revolt.

Despite occasional faults in form or stress--and we must remember that Giovannitti is writing in an alien tongue--the poems are vibrant with life and some of them express with truest art things which are not always considered by our academic friends to be at all within the province of poetry.

Sometimes the formal verse forms are used and, at other times, the poet has recourse to the free rhythmic mode of Whitman. Personally, I think that the best work is in the free verse. *The Walker*, a jail experience of Giovannitti's, is a wonderful piece of work and should be bracketed with *The Ballad of Reading Gaol*. The finest thing in the book is *The Cage*, a poem which appeared originally in *The Atlantic Monthly*, and which is one of the few things which have preserved that journal from irredeemable mediocrity.

The Cage expresses the thoughts and emotions of the writer when he stood with his two comrades in the dock of Salem courthouse. The contrast is drawn between the outworn formalities and rites of the law and the lusty life of labor,--between the dead lives of the dismal practitioners of a stilted and tyrannical formula and the life of vigorous conflict of the awakening working-class.

This is the inside of the court-room:

*In the middle of the great greenish room stood the green iron cage.
All was old, and cold and mournful, ancient with the double antiquity of heart and brain in the great greenish room,
Old and hoary was the man who sat upon the faldstool, upon the fireless and godless altar,
Old were the tomes that mouldered behind him on the dusty shelves.
Old was the man upon his left who awoke with his cracked voice the dead echoes of dead centuries, old the man upon his right who wielded a wand; and old all those who spoke to him and listened to him before and around the green iron cage.
Old were the words they spoke, and their faces were drawn and white and lifeless, without expression or solemnity; like the ikons of old cathedrals.
For of naught they knew, but of what was written in the old, yellow books. And all the joys and the pains and the loves and hatreds and furies and labors and strifes of man, all the fierce and divine passions that battle and rage in the heart of man, never entered into the great greenish room but to sit in the green iron cage.
Senility, dullness and dissolution were all around the green iron cage, and nothing was new and young and alive in the great*

room, except the three men who were in the cage.

And, then, when the prosecutor speaks, we have an insight into the fervor with which Giovannitti greets the overthrow of the old and the budding of the new:

*... he said (and dreary as a wind that moans thru the crosses
of an old graveyard was his voice):
"I will prove to you that these three men in the cage are criminals
and murderers and that they ought to be put to death."
Love, it was then that I heard for the first time the creak of the
moth that was eating the old painting and the old books,
and the worm that was gnawing the old bench, and it was
then that I saw that all the old men around the great
greenish room were dead.
They were dead like the old man in the painting, save that they could
still read the old books he could read no more, and still
spoke and heard the old words he could speak and hear no
more, and still passed the judgment of the dead, which he
could no more pass, upon the mighty life of the world
outside that throbbed and thundered and clamored and roared
the wonderful anthem of human labor to the fatherly justice
of the Sun.*

To me such stuff as this means a hundred times more than a thousand sonnets to a mistress' eye-lash, or than the weak maudlinities of an absinthe-soaked eroto-dabbler, wailing puling repentance to a pale Christ. It is compact of life--life as it is today, made, not for the tittillation of diletantes, but for the enjoyment and inspiration of men who can appreciate the meat of life redolent of sweat and blood and tears.

This is Giovannitti's picture of the Republic, after it had been gained with blood and sacrifice:

*When night with velvet-sandaled feet
Stole in her chamber's solitude,
Behold! she lay there naked, lewd,
A drunken harlot of the street,*

*With withered breasts and shaggy hair
Soiled by each wanton, frothy kiss,
Between a sergeant of police
And a decrepit millionaire.*

Love poems also figure in the book, but the dominant note is that of conflict. Giovannitti has realized the pregnant fact that in struggle is the greatest joy, that the ecstasy of growth and striving is worth more than the bovine placidity of "happiness." At the end of his love-song,

The Praise of Spring, he says:

*But shall I sing of love now, I who could only sing to the
tune of the clarions of war?
And shall I forget for a woman my black frothing horse that neighs
after the twanging arrows in the wind?
And shall I not lose my strength when her arms shall encircle me
where thou hast girt me with the sword, O Gea, my mother
immortal?*

Giovannitti makes no claim for inclusion in Parnassian galleries. He believes that deeds count for more than words, and he essays but to make a handful of war-songs for the pleasure of his comrades.

*Still may my song, before the sun's
Reveille, speed the hours that tire,
While they are cleaning up their guns
Around the cheery bivouac fire.*

And so, these are the rough-hewn songs of a man; of one who goes his way with his love upholding him and the Vision burning within him and the sound of battle forever in his ears and the whole-hearted hate of his enemy to spur him, and the stalwart comradeship of his fellows to make dear the thorny way.

The Restaurant Violin

George Soule

(*Another picture of our violinist*)

*A brook
Which murmured me to high afternoon fields,
Where came a shower,
And after that, the long, straight call of the low sun
To the green-gold and winking purple of every leaf
And the long shadows between the hills.
And every leaf was glad
And the earth was comforted,
Breathing up freshly,
And the hills were full of joy,
And the clouds remained in the west
In ecstasy of color because of the sun.
Out of hidden trees
A wood-thrush sang.*

*And then I heard the restaurant--
Crashing of spoons on trays,
The dip, dip, dip, of the big rotary fans,
The chink of the cash-register, the clatter of money into the tray,
And people talking loudly, with mirthless laughter,
And munching, munching, munching.*

*Over it mocked the violin--
The rain fell and the sun called,
And there returned unto the violin,
And entered with glory into the violin
Final loneliness.
Then the pianist selected something from a musical comedy.*

Editorials

Our Third New Poet

Maxwell Bodenheim was born in Natchez, Mississippi, twenty-two years ago, was educated in the Memphis, Tennessee, schools, served three years in the U. S. regular army, and is at present studying law and art in Chicago. He has written poetry for six years without having had a single poem accepted--in fact, he has had exactly three hundred and seventeen rejection slips from the astute editors of American magazines. He addresses to them the following poem:

The Poet Speaks To Those Who Scorn Him

*I have taken tons of carbon in my hand,
Shriveled them, with a thought, to a small diamond:
And tried to sell it to men who call it glass.
It was glass in a sense--
Glass which with terrible exactness,
Showed them big, hideous souls
Dwarfed by the splendor of its immense clarity,
Like forests pressed to specks by the height of a mountain.*

His first acceptance came from Miss Harriet Monroe, who prints five of his poems in the August issue of Poetry. "My creed," says Mr. Bodenheim "(if I can be said to have one), is this: Most of the things which men call beautiful are ugly to me, and some of the things they call ugly are beautiful. Men and deeds are subjects for prose, not

poetry. I am not concerned with life, but with that which lies behind life. I am an intense admirer of Ezra Pound's," he always adds; "I worship him."

Sade Iverson, Unknown

We wish the mysterious poet who sent us _The Milliner_--which we liked profoundly and printed in our last issue--would come in to see us. The poem arrived one day in April with a modest little note: "Something about your magazine--perhaps the essential actuality of it--has moved me to make 'the simple confession' which I enclose. Print it if it is good enough; throw it in the waste basket if it is not." But though we have tried various investigations we have not been able to find out who this remarkable Sade Iverson is. She was the first person to send us a congratulatory letter about THE LITTLE REVIEW. In it she warned us that restraint is better than expression; but _The Milliner_ will stand as a stronger refutation of that advice than anything we can say. We want very much to know Sade Iverson. After reading her poem Mr. Bodenheim wrote the following:

To Sade Iverson

*I wonder if you scooped out your entire melted soul
With shaking hands, and spilled it into this
Slim-necked but bulging-bodied flagon--
So slim-necked that my sticking lips
Must fight for wonderful drops.*

My Middle Name

*My middle name rhymes not with satchel,
So please do not pronounce it "Vatchel."
My middle name rhymes not with rock hell,
So please do not pronounce it "Vock Hell."
My middle name rhymes not with hash hell,
So please do not pronounce it "Vasch Hell."
My middle name rhymes not with bottle,
So please do not pronounce it "Vottle,"
My name is just the same as Rachel,
With V for R;
Please call me Vachel.*

Nicholas Vachel Lindsay.

The Project Gutenberg eBook of The Little Review, October 1914 (Vol. 1, No. 7), Edited by Margaret C. Anderson

Poems

WITTER BYNNER

Two Churches on Sunday

*They stand and bark like foolish dogs,
"O notice us! O notice us!"
And then they stand and whine....
As if to say, "The good kind God
That made the world made even us,
All in the scheme divine."
And then they bark like foolish dogs,
And then they stand and whine.*

The Last Words of Tolstoi

*Awhile I felt the imperial sky
Clothe a sole figure, which was I;
Then, lonely for democracy,
I hailed the purple robe of air
Kinship for all mankind to share;
But now at last, with ashen hair,
I learn it is not they nor I
Who own the mantle of the sky,--
Silence alone wears majesty.*

Apollo Sings

*Here shall come forth a flower
and near him ever grow.
But his ear heeds me not,
and my hot tears mean nothing
to him who was dearer to me*

*than Daphne, he whose clear eye,
that dazed the sun, now droops near earth....
O hyacinthine flower, grow here!*

*Sweet were his lips as a flower touching
the feet of a bee in Spring, his lips
would repeat the word, "Love, love,"
all that was sweet in the world was reborn.
Death could not defeat him,
for his young lips, completing love, were eager.
His youth shall ever be fleet, evading death....
O hyacinthine flower, be sweet!*

Cause

Helen Hoyt

*As the surprise of a woman
When she knows that she is pregnant,
Is the surprise of a murderer
Beholding that he has killed.*

*That so small a moment of time,
That so slight an act should suffice!*

*No plan, no purpose, ordained what befell,
Only the wild urging blood and muscle
And swift desire.*

*These,
In an instant,
Beyond retraction,
Could set in motion all the long inexorable processes of life:
All the long inexorable processes of death.
Could establish that which may not be effaced,
Which alters the world.*

The Silver Ship

Skipwith Cannéll

*A silver ship with silken sail
Fled ghost-like over a silver sea,
Swift to an island leper pale
Where dead hands furled the silken sail.
Then to the island bore they me,
And left me, stricken, there to see
My silver ship with silken sail
Fade out across a silent sea.*

The Butterfly

Skipwith Cannéll

One day in the lean youth of Summer, a butterfly was born upon the earth. To a brief day of beauty she was born, and to a long night.

Timidly her purple wings unfolded in the kind warmth of the sun. When they had grown strong, she began to flutter hither and thither, from flower to flower, a wingéd dream flitting as perfumes called her, from dream to dream.

At last, when the dark fingers of the night were clutching at the fields, from the brief stillness of twilight arose a brief summer storm. Only a few puffs of wind ruffled the grass, only a few growls of thunder silenced the birds, only a few warm drops of rain pattered among the trees. Then the storm passed and the sun shone over the wet earth as a sweetheart shines through her tears with promise of pardon.

But the warm wind had blown the butterfly against a twig, so that her wings were broken; and the soft summer rain had crushed her to the earth, so that she died. But there had been one passing, whose dreams were in music, and he had felt her beauty in his own. And he spun a web of harmony from the rainbow of his sorrow and the skeins of her beauty, so that men who had lost their dreams were snared in his net, and women whose hearts were buried wept for the death of a butterfly....

The Tidings

Skipwith Cannell

Once upon a time, in a certain secret city of the East, lived a woman who was a sorceress. And she awaited tidings of great joy or tidings of terrible sorrow.

All day long, from her housetop, she had peered across the desert, seeking the messenger who did not come. At nightfall her servants returned to her with rumors gathered in the market place. With rumors of sorrow they returned and stood in a row before her with averted faces.

When she had heard their fears, she thanked them, and going down from the housetop, she sought a hidden chamber where she could be alone and silent. When she had pondered for awhile, she piled rare herbs in a brazier, and wet them with strange liquors, and touched fire to them. The flames flickered and smoked, singing a soft happy little song all to themselves. But she could read no answer in the singing, and no meaning in the coils of smoke; and she was very sad. At last, with a despairing gesture, she took certain secret things from the chest whereof she alone had the key, and those things she laid upon the fire and watched until they were consumed.

As soon as the embers were cold and gray, she took from the carven chest a vial of jade and a jade cup. From the vial she poured out a pale green potion, and raising the cup in her hands, she drank it to the end. Then she lay down upon the marble couch. In a little while she slept.

A sweet, heavy vapor rose from the cup, filling the room with perfume. The dregs glowed with dull evil light, for the potion had been poison, and her sleep was death.

In the morning came a messenger, bearing tidings of great joy.

The Wicked to the Wise

Arthur Davison Ficke

*"A brilliant mind, gone wrong!" ...
O tell me, ye who throng
The beehives of the world, grow ye not ever weary of this song?*

*"The way our fathers went." ...
Yes, if our days were spent
Sod-deep, beside our fathers' bones, wise, needless were your argument.*

*"The wisdom of the mass." ...
Thank God, it too shall pass
Like the breathed film hiding the face grayly within the silvered glass.*

*"All's surely for the best!" ...
Aye, so shall be confessed
By your sons' sons, marking where down we smote you as we onward
pressed.*

Witter Bynner on the Imagists

In sending us *_Apollo Sings_*, Mr. Bynner remarks that it is more fun, for the moment to take a classic theme and mix it, with a little Whitman, into an anagram of rhyme than to imitate the Japanese and try to found a school. He goes on: "In spite of several lovely attempts, Pound's chiefly, the rest seeming to me negligible, they've not approached the poetess Chiyo's lines to her dead child:

*I wonder how far you have gone today,
Chasing after dragonflies--*

or Buson's

*Granted this dewdrop world is but a dewdrop world,
This granted, yet--*

I'm ungrateful to look critically toward an attempt to plant in English these little oriental flowers of wonder. If only they would acknowledge the attempt for what it is and not bring it forward with a French name and curious pedantries! Isn't the old name for this sort of poem *_Haikai_* or something of that sort? At any rate, there is a name. I ought to know it. And so ought they."

Book Discussion

Two Finds

*_Poems_*, by George Cronyn. [The Glebe. Albert and Charles Boni, New York.]

I am very sorry indeed that this book arrived when most of our space was pre-empted. I need room for the sort of appreciation that I feel for these poems.

That extraordinary, delightful, and Quixotic institution, *_The Glebe_*, which insists on publishing stuff on its merits, apart from considerations of popularity, has had divine luck in finding Cronyn,--whoever he is.

For Cronyn is a poet. Not just a versifier, but a poet. His verse has a facility which does not detract from its beauty. I have encountered sheer beauty more often in his book than in any volume of modern poetry that I have read for some time.

Here is a sample:

Clouds

*Whence do you come, oh silken shapes,
Across the silver sky?
We come from where the wind blows
And the young stars die.*

*Why do you move so fast, so fast
Across the white moon's breast?
The cruel wind is at our heels
And we may not rest.*

*Are you not weary, fleeing shapes,
That never cease to flee?
The forked tree's chained shadows are
Less weary than we.*

*Whither do you go, O shadow-shapes,
Across the ghastly sky?
We go to where the wind blows
And the old stars die.*

This is just a short and rather exuberant message to LITTLE REVIEW

readers, because I think they really deserve the pleasure of discovering Cronyn for themselves.

* * * *

*_Songs for the New Age_*, by James Oppenheim. [The Century Company, New York.]

One of the phenomena of the evolution of man is the constant broadening of consciousness. We become accustomed to the sharing of our feelings with larger and larger numbers of people; our identity with the race,--and even with inanimate things,--becomes increasingly plain to us through both the findings of science and heightened emotional receptivity.

And yet this wider consciousness by no means lessens the value or quality of personality. By a splendid paradox, the more we realize our inseparability with all life the more does our selfhood become accentuated. Thus is achieved the marriage of Democracy and Individualism. We find that, in the end, the cultivation of one is the nourishing of the other. I need hardly mention that I am not alluding to that simulacrum of equality: political democracy.

This must be known to appreciate the message of James Oppenheim. For it is pre-eminently as a message that these poems should be treated. They are of essential value as one of the most articulate efforts to translate that which in most people is mute.

There is an unmistakable kinship with Whitman in this work; not merely in the form,--which is here termed "polyrhythmic,"--but in the spirit, without hint of plagiarism or of abject imitation. Also we have the same breezy contempt for the petty trappings of civilization.

Here is an extract from the poem, *_Tasting the Earth_*, which has beauty as well as truth:

*O dark great mother-globe so close beneath me....
It was she with her inexhaustible grief,
Ages of blood-drenched jungles, and the smoking of craters, and the
 roar of tempests,
And moan of the forsaken seas,
It was she with the hills beginning to walk in the shapes of the
 dark-hearted animals,
It was she risen, dashing away tears and praying to dumb skies, in
 the pomp-crumbling tragedy of man....
It was she, container of all griefs, and the buried dust of broken
 hearts,
Cry of the christs and the lovers and the child-stripped mothers,
And ambition gone down to defeat, and the battle overborne,*

And the dreams that have no waking.

*My heart became her ancient heart:
On the food of the strong I fed, on dark strange life itself:
Wisdom-giving and somber with the unremitting love of ages....*

*There was dank soil in my mouth,
And bitter sea on my lips,
In a dark hour, tasting the Earth.*

This is enough to make one grateful to Mr. Oppenheim. But not always plays the cosmic symphony; sometimes the spheric strains relax for a few slender lyrics to a moving-picture lady or for the tender song to Annie, the working-girl. We leave the book with the conception of a manly and impressionable personality with a healthy lust for life, a deep insight into the world-soul and his own soul (which, after all, are the same), and great power to communicate his findings to us through a plastic and peculiarly individual medium.

CHARLES ASHLEIGH.

The Project Gutenberg eBook of The Little Review, November 1914 (Vol. 1, No. 8), by Margaret C. Anderson

Lyrics of an Italian

SCHARMEL IRIS

The Forest of the Sky

*High in the forest of the sky
The stars and branches interlace;
As cloth-of-gold the fallen leaves lie
Where twilight-peacocks lord the place,
Spendthrifts of pride and grace.*

*The grapes on vines are rubies red,
They burn as flame, when day is done.
The Dusk, brown Princess, turns her head
While sunset-panthers past her run
To caverns of the Sun.*

*She throws cord-reins of sunbeams wrought,
About the sunset-panthers, fleet,
And rides them joyously, when caught,
Across the popped fields of wheat—
Their hearts with terror beat.*

*They reach the caverns of the Sun,
The raven-clouds above them fly;
Dame Night her tapestry's begun.
High, o'er the forest of the sky
The moon, a boat, sails by.*

Iteration

*My son is dead and I am going blind,
And in the Ishmael-wind of grief
I tremble like a leaf;
I have no mind for any word you say:
My son is dead and I am going blind.*

April

*I loved her more than moon or sun—
There is no moon or sun for me;
Of lovely things to look upon,
The loveliest was she.*

*She does not hear me, though I sing—
And, oh, my heart is like to break!
The world awakens with the Spring,
But she—she does not wake!*

Scarlet—White

(_ Struck at the double standard _)

*The woman who is scarlet now
Was soul of whiteness yesterday;
A void is she wherein a man
May leave his lust to-day.*

*'Twas with the kiss Ischariot
A traitor bore her heart away;
Her body now is leased by men*

That kneel at church to pray.

Three Apples

*I who am Giver of Life
Out of the cradle of dawn
Bring you this infant of song.—
He has a golden tongue
And wings upon his feet.*

*The apple of silver he holds
Once lay at the breast of the moon;
I give him an apple of gold
'Twas forged in the fires of the sun;
This apple of copper I give
That Sunset concealed in her hair.*

*When from the husk of dusk I shake the stars,
Down slumber's vine I'll send him dreams in dew,
And peace will overtake him like a song
Like thoughts of love invade a lover's mind.
The spear-scars of the red world he will wear
As women in their hair may wear a rose.*

*On the rosary of his days
He will say a prayer for your sake,
The hounds-o'-wonder will lie at his side,
And lick the dust-o'-the-world from his feet.*

*The apple of silver will work him a charm
When under his pillow he lays it at night;
The apple of copper will warm his heart
When a heart he loves grows cold on his own;
The apple of gold will teach him a song
For children to sing when he blows on a reed;
The dew will hear and run to the sun,
The sun will whisper it in my ear,
And you, being dead, the song will hear.*

Poems

MAXWELL BODENHEIM

Expressions of a Child's Face

*Dawn?—no, the stunted transparency of dawn—
Color taken from the birth of a white throat
And shaken in a still cup till it gradually reaches strength
A sudden scattering of strained light—
The smile has lived and seemed to die.*

*Thought?—no, the invisible shudder of a perfume
Trying to leave the shadowy pain of a flesh-flower
A whisp of it whips itself away,
And leaves the rest—a cool, colorless struggle.*

*Sadness?—no, the growth of a pale inclination
Which knows not what it is;
Which tries to form the beginning of a swift question,
But has not yet developed trim lips.*

*And then what seems a smile
But is the sleeping body of a laugh.
It almost awakes, and throws out
Long breaths, in a green and yellow din.*

Emotions

I

*His anger was a strained yellow wire.
You leapt into it thinking to snap it,
But it flung you off silently.*

II

*Her happiness was too apparent—
Pleasant flesh in which you sensed heavy blood-clots.*

III

*Veering, weary birds were her hatreds.
They rested on you for years,
Then circled away, still weary.*

IV

*Her sorrows were clumsy, black bandages
Which seemed to hide wide wounds,
But only covered scratches.*

To ——

*You are a broad, growing sieve.
Men and women come to loosen your supple frame,
And weave another slim square into you—
Or perhaps a blue oblong, a saffron circle.
People fling their powdered souls at you:
You seem to loose them, but retain
The shifting shadow of a stain on your rigid lines.*

To Handpainted Chinaware

*Distorted ducks, smirking women and potshaped blossoms
Fastened to pale plates, you are dreary symbols of those who painted
you.
O ducks, you were made by women
Who sway in and out of the waters of life,
Content to catch morsels of food from birds flying overhead.
And you smirking women, were painted by men
Who unrolled little souls on plates,
Gave them faces which could not quite hide their ugliness ...
You alone almost baffle me, potshaped blossoms—
Were you fashioned by childless women, who made you the infants
Denied them by life?*

Study of a Face

*Her forehead is the wind-colored, sun-stilled wall of a country
church.
Trailing cloud-shudders overhead narrow it to a thin band of vague
light:
Two tarnished, exultant cerements of earth—cheeks—meet it,
And the three speak clearly, languidly.*

An Old Man Humming a Song

*Life was a frayed, pampered lily to him—
A lily which still clung to his gray coat,
Like an unbidden word whitening the death of a smile.
The half-smooth perfume of it touched the slanting, cambric curtain of
his soul,
And stirred it to low song.*

The Spiritual Dangers of Writing Vers Libre

Eunice Tietjens

The spiritual dangers that beset a struggling poet are almost as numerous as his creditors, and quite as rampant. And woe unto him who falls a prey to any one of them! For poetry, being the immediate reflection of the spiritual life of its author, degenerates more quickly than almost any other form of human expression when this inner life goes astray.

There is first of all the danger of sentimentality, an ever-present, sticky danger that awaits patiently and imperturbably and has to be met afresh every day. True, if the poet yields to this danger and embraces it skillfully enough, the creditors aforementioned may sometimes be paid and much adulation acquired into the bargain—witness Ella Wheeler Wilcox—but it is at the price of artistic death.

There is the danger of giving the emotions too free rein, of producing, as Arthur Davison Ficke has said in a former number of THE LITTLE REVIEW, merely “an inarticulate cry of emotion” which moves us like “the crying of a child.” Much of our sex poetry is of this type. On the other hand, there is the equally present danger of becoming over-intellectualized—of drying up and blowing away before the wind of human vitality. Edmund Clarence Stedman went that way. Then there is the danger of determined modernity, of resolutely setting out to be “vital” at all costs and crystallizing into mere frozen impetuosity, as Louis Untermeyer has done—and the other danger of dwelling professorially in the past with John Myers O’Hara. There is too the new danger of “cosmicity,” of which John Alford amusingly accuses our American poets of to-day. And there are many, many other pitfalls that the unsuspecting poet must meet and bridge before he can hope to win to the heights of immortality.

But there seems to be a whole new set of dangers, especially virulent, that attend the writing of *_vers libre_*, free verse, polyrhythmics, or whatever else one may choose to call the free form so prevalent to-day. These dangers are inherent in the form itself and are directly traceable to it. For contrary to the general notion on the subject, it takes a better balanced intellect to write good *_vers libre_* than to write in the old verse forms. It is essentially an art for the sophisticated, and the tyro will do well to avoid it.

The first of these dangers, and the one in which all the others take root, is a very insidious peril, and few there be who escape it. It is the danger of being obvious.

In writing rhymed or even rhymeless poetry of a conventional rhythmical pattern the mind is constantly obliged to sift and sort the various images which present themselves—to test them, and turn them this way and that, as one does pieces in a mosaic, till they at last fit more or less perfectly into the pattern. This process, although it sometimes, owing to the physical formation of the language, distorts the poet's meaning a little, has the great artistic advantage of eliminating many casual first associations, which on careful thought are found not worth saying. It is precisely this winnowing, weighing process which the form of free verse lacks. Anything that comes to mind can be said at once, and with a little instinct for rhythm, is said. The result of this mental laziness is that the ideas expressed are often obvious.

But here a curious phenomenon of the human mind comes into play. Just as a physically lazy man will often perform great mental exertions to avoid moving, so the mind will frequently go to quite as great lengths to find unusual methods of expression to conceal, even from itself, this laziness of first thinking. The result is the attempt to cover with words the fundamental paucity of the ideas.

There are several principal effects which may result from this. One is brutality. A conception which, if spoken simply, is at once recognized as trite, may if said brutally enough pass muster as surprising and "strong." A crude illustration of this is to be found in the recent war poetry of "mangled forms" and "gushing entrails." Ezra Pound furnishes the most perfect example. Another effect is the tendency to the grotesque. This device is more successful in deceiving the poet himself than the other, though it has less general appeal. For it is possible, by making a thing grotesque enough, to cover almost completely the underlying conception. Skipwith Cannell runs this danger, along with lesser men. A third peril is that which besets some of the Imagistes—the danger of reducing the idea to a minimum and relying entirely on the sound and color of the words to carry the poem.

Still another result of the complete loosening of the reins possible in *_vers libre_* is the immediate enlargement of the ego. It is not so easy

to see why this should result, but it almost invariably does, and has since the days of Whitman. It usually goes to-day with the effect of brutality. The universe divides itself at once into two portions, of which the poet is by far the greater half. “I”—“I”—“I” they say, and again “I”—“I”—“I.” And having said it they appear to be vastly relieved.

The next step is to lay about them gallantly at every person or tendency that has ever annoyed them. “I have been abused” they say, “I have been neglected! You intolerable Philistines, I will get back at you!” It is odd that it never seems to occur to these young men that they can only hit those persons who read them, and that every person who reads them is at least a prospective friend. Those who neglect them they can never reach—and slapping one’s friends is an unprofitable amusement.

Examples of these unfortunate spiritual results of abandoning oneself too recklessly to the free verse form are numerous. James Oppenheim’s latest volume, *Songs for the New Age*—although it is in many ways an excellent work and deserves endorsement by all who really belong to the new age and are not merely accidentally alive to-day—nevertheless shows in places the tendency to obviousness and slack work.

More flagrant examples are to be found elsewhere. Take for instance Orrick Johns. Here are some stanzas from his long poem, *Second Avenue*, which took the prize in Mitchell Kennerley’s *Lyric Year*:

*“How often does the wild-bloom smell
Over the mountained city reach
To hold the tawny boys in spell
Or wake the aching girls to speech?*

*The clouds that drift across the sea
And drift across the jagged line
Of mist-enshrouded masonry—
Hast thou forgotten these are thine?*

*That drift across the jagged line
Which you, my people, reared and built
To be a temple and a shrine
For gods of iron and of gilt—*

*Aye, these are thine to heal thy heart,
To give thee back the thrill of Youth,
To seek therein the gold of Art,
And seek the broken shapes of Truth.”*

The same Orrick Johns wrote this blatant bit of free verse in *Poetry* a few months later. Both the paucity of ideas and the enlarged ego are very well shown here:

*No man shall ever read me,
For I bring about in a gesture what they cannot fathom in a life;
Yet I tell Bob and Harry and Bill—
It costs me nothing to be kind;
If I am a generous adversary, be not deceived, neither be devoted—
It is because I despise you.
Yet if any man claim to be my peer I shall meet him,
For that man has an insolence that I like;
I am beholden to him.
I know the lightning when I see it,
And the toad when I see it ...
I warn all pretenders.*

But to see the tendencies of which we have spoken in their most exaggerated form it is necessary to go to Ezra Pound, the young self-expatriated American who wails because “that ass, my country, has not employed me.” His earlier work was clean-cut, sensitive poetry, some of it very beautiful. This for example:

PICCADILLY

*Beautiful, tragical faces,
Ye that were whole, and are so sunken;
And, O ye vile, ye that might have been loved,
That are so sodden and drunken,
Who hath forgotten you?*

O wistful, fragile faces, few out of many!

*The gross, the coarse, the brazen,
God knows I cannot pity them, perhaps, as I should do,
But, oh, ye delicate, wistful faces,
Who hath forgotten you?*

This, from *Blast*, the new English quarterly, is the latest from the same hand. The capitals are his own. The contrast needs no comment:

SALUTATION THE THIRD

*Let us deride the smugness of “The Times”:
GUFFAW!
So much the gagged reviewers,
It will pay them when the worms are wriggling in their vitals;
These were they who objected to newness,
HERE are their TOMB-STONES.*

They supported the gag and the ring:

*A little black BOX contains them.
SO shall you be also,
You shut-bellied obstructionist,
You sworn foe to free speech and good letters,
You fungus, you continuous gangrene.*

* * * * *

*I have seen many who go about with supplications,
Afraid to say how they hate you
HERE is the taste of my BOOT,
CARESS it, lick off the BLACKING.*

To attempt to lay the entire onus of so flagrant a spiritual and cerebral degeneration to the writing of vers libre alone is of course impossible. But the tendency is clear. Fortunately, however, we are not all Ezra Pounds and there are still poets balanced enough to appreciate these dangers and to make of free verse the wonderful vehicle it can be in the hands of a genius.

Union

Rabindranath Tagore

(_Translated from the original Bengali by Basanta Koomar Roy, author of "Rabindranath Tagore: The Poet and His Personality." _)

Beloved, every part of my being craves for the corresponding part of yours. My heart is heavy with its own restlessness, and it yearns to fall senseless on yours.

My eyes linger on your eyes, and my lips long to attain salvation by losing their existence on your lips.

* * * * *

My thirsty heart is crying bitterly for the unveiling of your celestial form.

* * * * *

The heart is deep in the ocean of being, and I sit by the forbidding shore and moan for ever.

But to-night, beloved, I shall enter the mysteries of existence with a bosom heaving with love supreme, and my entire being shall find its

eternal union in thine.

The Birth of a Poem

(_Translated from the Russian of Maximilian Voloshin by A. S. K. _)

*In my soul is a fragrant dusk of coming thunder...
Heat-lightnings coil there like blue-birds...
Lighted windows burn...
And fibres, long,
Slow-singing,
Grow in the gloom...
O the odor of flowers that reaches a scream!
Lo! lightning in a white zig-zag...
And at once all became bright and great...
How radiant is the night!
Words dance, then flash in couples
In an enamored harmony.
Out of the womb of consciousness, from the bottom of the labyrinth—
Visions crowd in a quailing host...
And the verse blossoms into a hyacinth-flower,
Cold, fragrant, white.*

Another New Poet

Mr. Scharmél Iris is a young Italian poet, born in Florence, who at the tender age of ten, and later, was praised by Ruskin, Swinburne, Francis Thompson, Edmund Gosse, and other men who may be assumed to know what good poetry is. Ruskin wrote: "He is a youth of genius and his poems are marvelously beautiful. His heart has felt the pathos of life and he has set this pathos to music." Swinburne said: "He writes with imaginative ardor, and impassioned is the word which best illustrates his utterance. He is genuine and sincere, and his lovely poems display energy of emotion and a true sense of poetic restraint." Thompson was more superlative: "I believe Scharmél Iris to be a poet of the first rank," he stated. "His poems are sublime in conception, rich in splendid imagery, full of remarkable metaphors and new figures, and musical in expression." Of course it has been difficult for a young man of such talent to find a publisher or a public; but at last a volume of his work is to be brought out by the Ralph Fletcher Seymour Company. The book will be called *_Lyrics of a Lad_*, and will be ready about Christmas time. Beside a preface by Maurice Francis Egan and an interesting

title-page decoration by Michele Greco, it will have a frontispiece portrait by Eugene R. Hutchinson, the photographer who should never be referred to by any noun except “artist.” Personally, we love Mr. Iris’s work; we use the verb thoughtfully, because his poetry is not merely the sort which interests or attracts; it remains in your mind as part of that art treasure-house which is your religion and your life.

Prizes for Poetry

An interesting announcement comes from *Poetry* in regard to two prize offers. One—the Helen Haire Levinson prize of two hundred dollars for the best poetry by a citizen of the United States published in the magazine during its second year—has been awarded to Mr. Carl Sandburg for his *Chicago Poems*. This is a particularly gratifying decision, for Mr. Sandburg’s is a new voice which must be reckoned with in American poetic production. The second is a one hundred dollar offer for the best war or peace poem on the present European situation, and has been given to Miss Louise Driscoll of Catskill, New York, for a poem called *Metal Checks*, which appears in the November issue.

Book Discussion

Vachel Lindsay’s Books

The Congo and Other Poems, by Vachel Lindsay. [The Macmillan Company, New York.]

It is not too much to say that many of us are watching Vachel Lindsay with the undisguised hope in our hearts that he may yet prove to be the “Great American Poet.” He has come so fast and far on the road to art and sanity since the early days when he drew minute, and seemingly pathological, maps of the territories of heaven, and grinning grotesques of the Demon Rum! He has carved his own way with so huge and careless a hand! And his work, in spite of its strangeness, is so deeply rooted in the crude but stirring consciousness that is America to-day! Surely there is ground for hope.

Like every artist who creates a new form, Mr. Lindsay has had to educate his public. And the task is not by any means accomplished yet. We have had to overcome an instinctive feeling that poetry should be dignified, and to look the fact in the face that it must first of all be telling,

and that in cases where these two elements conflict, dignity is a secondary consideration. We have been rudely jostled out of our academic position that poetry must be condensed, poignant, and literary, and we have been shown that by going back to the primitive conception—which included as the principal element the half-chant of the bard—true poetry may be diffuse, full of endless iterations and strangely impassioned over crude and even external objects. So much we have learned, and after the first shock of surprise, learned gladly. It has opened to us whole new reaches of enjoyment. We hope sincerely that we are not yet done with Mr. Lindsay's educative process.

The Congo is the title poem of his new volume. To describe the poem adequately would require almost as much space as the nine pages it occupies. So it must suffice to say that it is perilously near great poetry, broad in sweep, imaginative, full of fire and color, psychological—and very strange. Much in the same vein are *The Firemen's Ball* and *The Santa Fe Trail*, which appeared originally in *Poetry*.

Several of the poems in this volume, among them *Darling Daughter of Babylon* and *I Went Down Into the Desert*, are already familiar to readers of THE LITTLE REVIEW, as they were first published in the June number. The volume contains also a delightful section of poems for children, and a group dealing with the present European war.

Both *The Congo* and Mr. Lindsay's earlier volume, *General Booth Enters Heaven*, are extraordinarily interesting books. Every mind which is truly alive to-day should know at least one of them.

Adventures While Preaching the Gospel of Beauty, by Nicholas Vachel Lindsay.

[Mitchell Kennerley, New York.]

Almost simultaneously with *The Congo* has appeared a prose volume by Mr. Lindsay, *Adventures while Preaching the Gospel of Beauty*. It is an account, in the form of a diary, of a walk through Missouri and Kansas, and into Colorado. Its value is almost purely personal. To anyone who is interested in Mr. Lindsay's striking personality, this book will serve as a spiritual Baedeker. As literature its value is comparatively slight. It contains, however, one of his most striking poems, *The Kallyope Yell*, which appeared originally in *The Forum*. This alone is worth the price of the volume.

EUNICE TIETJENS.

The Project Gutenberg eBook of The Little Review, December 1914 (Vol. 1, No. 9), edited by Margaret C. Anderson

Poems

RICHARD ALDINGTON

On a Motor-Bus at Night

(Oxford Street)

*The hard rain-drops beat like wet pellets
On my nose and right cheek
As we jerk and slither through the traffic.*

*There is a great beating of wheels
And a rumble of ugly machines.*

*The west-bound buses are full of men
In grey clothes and hard hats,
Holding up umbrellas
Over their sallow faces
As they return to the suburban rabbit-holes.
The women-clerks
Try to be brightly dressed;
Now the wind makes their five-shilling-hats jump
And the hat-pins pull their hair.*

*When one is quite free, and curious,
They are fascinating to look at—
Poor devils of a sober hell.*

*The shop-lamps and the street-lamps
Send steady rayed floods of yellow and red light
So that Oxford street is paved with copper and chalcedony.*

Church Walk, Kensington

(Sunday Morning)

*The cripples are going to church.
Their crutches beat upon the stones,
And they have clumsy iron boots.*

*Their clothes are black, their faces peaked and mean;
Their legs are withered
Like dried bean-pods.*

Their eyes are as stupid as frogs'.

*And the god, September,
Has paused for a moment here
Garlanded with crimson leaves.
He held a branch of fruited oak.
He smiled like Hermes the beautiful
Cut in marble.*

Sufficiency

Helen Hoyt

*I wish no guardian angel:
I do not seek fairies in the trees:
The trees are enough in themselves.*

On Poetry

Aesthetics and Common-Sense

LLEWELLYN JONES

Poetry, we are often told, cannot be defined but—by way of consolation—can always be recognized. Unfortunately the latter half of that statement seems no longer true, especially of latter-day poetry. Fratricidal strife between makers of *_vers libre_* and formalists goes on merrily, while the people whose contribution to poetry is their

appreciation of it—and purchase of it—are not unnaturally playing safe and buying Longfellow in padded ooze.

I always thought I could recognize authentic poetry on most themes and even flattered myself that I had some little understanding of the psychology of its production. Latterly two voices have come to me, one affirming that I was right in my prejudice that all durable verse should have content as well as form, should have meaning as well as sound—though in closest union with the sound,—that, in short, the poet should be a thinker as well as a craftsman; an emotional thinker, of course, if that term be permitted, but not a mere clairaudient wielder of words. And then I heard a voice which bid me forget all that and list to

Long breaths, in a green and yellow din.

Hastening to give credit where it is due, let me remind the readers of THE LITTLE REVIEW that this is the last line of a poem by Maxwell Bodenheim in the last number of that periodical. I trust that Mr. Bodenheim will forgive me for using him to point a moral and adorn a critical article, especially as I shall have to compare him with Wordsworth before I get through, and shall have to ask him whether he is not carrying the Wordsworthian tradition just a little too far into the region of the individual and subjective, into the unknown territory of the most isolated thing in the world: the human mind in those regions of it which have not been socially disciplined into the categories which make communication possible between mind and mind.

The other voice which I have mentioned is that of Professor S. B. Gass, of the University of Nebraska, who writes on Literature as a Fine Art in *The Mid-West Quarterly* for July.

Professor Gass takes the very sane position that words are the socially-created tools—arbitrary symbols, he calls them—to give us “not the thing itself, but something about the thing—some relationship, some classification, some generalization, some cause, some effect, some attribute, something that goes on wholly in the mind and is not sensuously present in the thing itself.” And that work, he continues, is thought, and it proceeds by statement. But undoubtedly words have sensuous sounds and sensuous denotations and connotations. Professor Gass admits this, but regards their sensuous properties—and especially, I imagine he would insist, their sensuous sounds based on physiological accident—as secondary. Hence, to him, Imagism would be a use of words for purely secondary results. And that is decadence: “Decadence arises out of the primary pursuit of secondary functions.” Now Wordsworth and the romantic school generally used words in this way, and so, logically enough, Professor Gass classifies Wordsworth as a decadent. In doing so we fear he exhibits an intellect too prone to dichotomize. He cuts human psychology up into too many and too water-tight compartments. When he

quotes Wordsworth's

*... I saw a crowd,
A host of golden daffodils;
Beside the lake, beneath the trees,
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.*

he seems to forget that there is more in that poem than its imagism—as we would call it now; that it is record of a personal experience, that is not only a trespass on the domain of the painter (to speak as if we agreed with our critic) but that it is a personal reaction to the picture painted in those words, that it tells us something that no mere picture could do. The poem, in fact, is a picture plus a story of the effect of the picture upon a human soul.

But the point in which I agree with Professor Gass is that—whatever the ultimate purpose of literature, including the lyric; whether, as he says, it is “a reflection of human nature, intellectual in its mode, critical in its spirit, and moral in its function”; or whether it is legitimate to regard its rhythms in words and “secondary” connotations and associations of words as materials for an art rather than for a criticism of life—the point beyond all this that I think fundamental is that literature does what it does—inform, enlighten, or transport—by understandable statement.

Certainly all appreciation of literature that dares to voice itself—that is all criticism—must proceed on this supposition, and it is just this supposition that is flouted by some of Mr. Bodenheim's poems.

Take the following, for instance:

TO —

*You are a broad, growing sieve.
Men and women come to you to loosen your supple frame,
And weave another slim square into you—
Or perhaps a blue oblong, a saffron circle.
People fling their powdered souls at you:
You seem to lose them, but retain
The shifting shadow of a stain on your rigid lines.*

Now obviously there is no sense in this in the ordinary intellectualistic meaning of the word sense. Unlike most poetry, it cannot be analyzed into a content which we might say was expressed suitably or unsuitably in a form. If, then, it be a good poem, we must look elsewhere for its excellence. I would hesitate to find that excellence in the mere sound of the words. Is it then in their associations? Arthur Ransome, the English critic, accounts for the

peculiar effect of poetry by its use of what he calls potential language—of words which by long association have come to mean more than they say, that have not only a denotation like scientific words, but a sometimes definite, sometimes hazy, connotation, an emotional content over and above what is intellectually given in their purely etymological content. Does this help us here? I am afraid not. Personally I have always associated sieves with ashes and garden-earth (there is also a little triangular sieve that fits into kitchen sinks). Blue oblongs and saffron circles remind me of advertising posters and futurist pictures; while—I admit a certain poetic quality of a sort here—powdered souls remind me of Aubrey Beardsley.

But, perhaps, the ultimate objection to this poem as it stands is the fact that I have an uneasy suspicion that some printer may have transposed some of these expressions. For would it not really have made better sense if the poem had spoken of a saffron oblong and a blue square? Certainly if I choose to think that that is what it must have been originally no other reader, on the face of the matter, could convince me otherwise. While, if another reader told me that Mr. Bodenheim had once studied geometry and therefore could not possibly have written about a “slim square”, I would be quite unable to convince him otherwise.

But—it will be objected—it is quite unfair to any poem to analyze it word by word. It spoils its beauty. I challenge the assertion, and even assert the opposite. As a matter of fact, it is only by analysis that we can tell good poetry from bad poetry. For instance:

*Crown him with many crowns
The lamb upon his throne.*

Analyze that and it straightway appears the nonsense that it really is. But, on the other hand, take this poem of Francis Thompson’s (I quote only a part):

*Does the fish soar to find the ocean,
The eagle plunge to find the air—
That we ask of the stars in motion
If they have rumour of thee there?*

*Not where the wheeling systems darken,
And our benumbed conceiving soars!—
The drift of pinions, would we hearken,
Beats at our own clay-shuttered doors.*

*The angels keep their ancient places;—
Turn but a stone, and start a wing!
'Tis ye, 'tis your estrangèd faces,
That miss the many-splendored thing.*

Now that poem, it will be observed, is not unrelated in subject to the two lines quoted just above it. And yet, how it defies any effort to analyze it out into anything else than itself. Rhythm, cosmic picturings, the homely metaphors of the dusty road, all combine to place us in an attitude toward, to give us a feeling for, reality, which is different from, and nobler than, those of the man who has either never read this poem, never read the same message in other poetic language, or—what is more to the point—never managed to get for himself the same experience which dictated that poem.

For, after all, if I were to agree with Professor Gass that poetry (as a part of literature) is not a fine art, it would be because I think it more than a fine art. Because I think the function of poetry is not merely to be a verbal picture art or a verbal music art, but to be an organon of reconciliation between art and life. The best poems, I think, will be found to be those which alter our consciousness in such a way that our inward, and even our outward, lives are altered. The poet sees the world as we do not see it. Consequently, he can put a new complexion on it for us. The world is pluralistic, and so are we. Intellectually we may be of the twentieth century, but emotionally we may be born out of our due season. Then let the poet of that due season mediate to us the emotional life that we need. Living in America, we may, through him, reach Greece or India. By his aid we may conquer the real world; by his aid we may flee from it if it threatens to conquer us. By his aid alone we may get outside of our own skins and into the very heart of the world.

What, then, shall we say, when poetry offers to conduct us into a world of growing sieves, slim squares, powdered souls, cool, colorless struggles, the obstetrical adventures of white throats, and green and yellow dins?

I have heard of a book which explains the fourth dimension. If I ever get a chance to read that book, and if I find that I can understand the fourth dimension, I shall have another shot at the appreciation of this poetry. For I have a slumbering shadow of a pale-gray idea (if I, too, may wax poetic) that in the sphere of the fourth dimension a slim square would be a perfectly possible conception.

I shall arise and go home now and read some poems by the late Mr. Meredith who is popularly supposed to be obscure.

In Defense of Vers Libre

ARTHUR DAVISON FICKE

(*A reply to "Spiritual Dangers of Writing Vers Libre" by Eunice Tietjens in the November issue of The Little Review*)

The properly qualified judge of poetry can have no doubts about *vers libre*; if he doubts it, he is no judge. He belongs to that class of hide-bound conservatives who are unwilling to discard the old merely because it is old. He does not yet understand that the newest is always the best. Worst of all, he does not appreciate the value of Freedom.

Freedom is the greatest of boons to the artist. The soul of the artist must not be hampered by unnecessary constraints. The old fixed verse-forms—such as the sonnet, blank verse, and all the other familiar metres—were exactly as cramping to the free creating spirit of the poet as the peculiar spaces and arches of the Sistine Chapel were to the designing instinct of Michael Angelo. Lamentable misfortune! that his Sibyls had to occupy those awkward corners. How much would they not have gained in grandeur could they have had all outdoors to expand in!

All outdoors is just what *vers libre* affords the poet of today. He is no longer under the necessity of moulding his thought into an artificial pattern, compressing it to a predetermined form; it can remain fluent, unsubjugated, formless, like a spontaneous emotional cry. No longer need he accept such fatal and stereotyped bondage as that under which Milton labored when the iron mechanics of blank verse forced him to standardize, to conventionalize, his emotion in such lines as—

*O dark dark dark amid the blaze of noon,
Irrecoverably dark, total eclipse
Without all hope of day!...*

To be honest, we must admit that there was something sickly and soul-destroying about the earlier verse-forms. The too-honeyed sweetness and metrical constraint of *Paradise Lost* has always secretly repelled the true judge of poetry; and Shakespeare's Sonnets have never been thoroughly satisfactory just because of the fatal necessity under which the author worked, of rhyming his lines in conformity with a fixed order. How could spiritual originality survive such an ordeal?

It would be unwise, however, to condemn the whole body of past poets; for certain of the earlier practitioners did, in their rudimentary way, see the light. Milton in *Sampson Agonistes*, in the midst of passages of the old-fashioned regular blank verse, introduced several choruses in *vers libre*; and these could perhaps hardly be surpassed by any English or American poet now living. As everyone knows, Walt Whitman (see *The*

Poets of Barbarism by George Santayana) used *vers libre* profusely. In fact, there extends backward from us an unbroken chain of distinguished *vers libre* tradition, through Whitman, Matthew Arnold, Southey, Shelley, Milton, and many others; the chain ends only with that first “probably arboreal” singer just antedating the first discoverer of regular rhythm. *Vers libre* is as old as the hills, and we shall always have it with us.

The one defect of the earlier practitioners of *vers libre* was that they did not have the wit to erect it into a cult. They used the free form only when it seemed to them essentially appropriate to the matter—that is to say, they used it sporadically, desultorily. Today we know better. Today we know that the free form must be used ever and always. *In hoc signo vinces!*

As a modern poet admirably says—

*Those envious outworn souls
Whose flaccid academic pulses
Beat to no rythms of more Dionysiac scope
Than metronomes,—
Or dollar-twenty-five alarm-clocks,—
They will forever
Cavil at novelty, at beauty, at freshness;
But, hell!—
But, a thousand devils!—
But, _Henri Quatre_ and the _Pont Neuf_!—
We of the new age, who leap upon the mountains like goats upon the
 heaps of tin cans in the vacant lots, and butt the stars,—
We know they are liars,
And that we are what we are.*

Could that be expressed in a sonnet? I think not. At least, it could not be expressed so vigorously, so wisely, so well.

There is, however, one obvious peril against which the enthusiast must guard himself. *Vers libre* is not of itself a complete warranty of success; because a poem is in this form, it is not necessarily fine poetry. “Love is enough,” says William Morris; he would not have said the same about *vers libre*. A certain power of conception, beyond the brilliant and original idea involved in the very employing of the free verse-form, is requisite for real importance in the finished product.

Nor is the statement of the poet’s own unique and terrifying importance a sufficient theme to constitute the burden of all his work. Several of our most immortal living *vers libristes* have fallen into such an error. This “ego über alles” concept, though profound and of a startling originality, lacks variety if it be indefinitely repeated. Should the poet, however, feel deep in his soul that there is nothing else worth

saying except this, let him at least take care to beautify his idea by the use of every artifice. After saying "I am I, and great," let him not forget to add variety and contrast to the picture by means of the complementary idea: "You, O world, are you, and contemptible." In such minglings of light and shade lies poetry's special and proper beauty.

Vers libre has one incontestable advantage over all those more artificial vehicles in which the poets of the past have essayed to ride into immortality. This newly popular verse-form can be used perfectly well when the poet is drunk. Let no one of temperate habits underestimate this advantage; let him think of others. Byron was drunk most of the time; had he been able to employ a form like this, how many volumes could he perhaps have added to the mere seventeen that now constitute his work! Shelley,—seldom alcoholicly affected, I believe,—was always intoxicated with ideas; he, equipped solely with the new instrument, could have written many more epics like *_Queen Mab_*, and would probably have felt less need of concentrating his work into the narrow limits of such formalistic poems as *_The West Wind_*.

Let it be understood that all the principles suggested in this monograph are intended only for the true devotee of *_vers libre_*. One can have nothing but contempt for the poet who, using generally the old-fashioned metres, turns sometimes to *_vers libre_* as a medium, and carries over into it all those faults of restrained expression and patterned thought which were the curse of the old forms. Such a writer is beyond hope, beyond counsel. We can forgive Matthew Arnold, but not a contemporary.

Certain devoted American friends of poetry have been trying for some time to encourage poetry in this country; and I think they are on the right track when they go about it by way of encouraging *_vers libre_*. No other method could so swiftly and surely multiply the number of our verse-writers. For the new medium presents no difficulties to anyone; even the tired business-man will find himself tempted to record his evening woes in singless song. True, not everyone will be able at first to produce *_vers libre_* of the quality that appears in the choruses of *_Sampson Agonistes_*:

*This, this is he; softly a while;
Let us not break in upon him.
O change beyond report, thought, or belief!
See how he lies at random, carelessly diffused,
With languished head unpropt,
As one past hope, abandoned,
And by himself given over,
In slavish habit, ill-fitted weeds
O'er-worn and soiled.
Or do my eyes misrepresent? Can this be he,
That heroic, that renowned,
Irresistible Sampson? whom, unarmed,*

*No strength of man, or fiercest wild beast, could withstand?...
Which first shall I bewail,
Thy bondage or lost sight,
Prison within prison
Inseparably dark?*

That is indeed admirable, and not so easy to write as it looks. But some kind of _vers libre_ can be turned out by anyone; and to encourage the use of this medium will be to encourage and vastly increase that multitudinous body of humble and industrious versifiers who are at present the most conspicuous ornament of American literature.

The Decorative Strait-Jacket: Rhymed Verse

MAXWELL BODENHEIM

The clamping of the inevitable strait-jacket, rhymed verse, upon the shrinking form of poetry has been the pastime of centuries. Those who would free poetry from the outworn metal bands and let her stretch her cramped limbs are labeled decadent, slothful, and futile. How easy it is to paste disagreeable labels upon the things one happens to dislike.

I admit that poetry freed from the bonds she has so long worn may become vulgar and over-demonstrative. A convict who has just been released from a penitentiary is perhaps inclined to caper down the road, and split the air with good red shouts. But after his first excesses he walks slowly, thinking of the way before him. With some poets free verse is still the boisterous convict; with others it is already the sober, determined individual. But I rather like even the laughing convict, looking back and flinging huge shouts at his imposing but petty prison.

Suppose I were a Bluebeard who had enticed a young girl into my dim chamber of poetic-thought. Suppose I took the little knife of rhyme and coolly sliced off one of her ears, two or three of her fingers, and finished by clawing out a generous handful of her shimmering, myriad-tinted hair, with the hands of meter. I might afterwards display her to the world, saying: "Look! Is she not still beautiful, still almost perfect?" But would that excuse my butchery? The lesson is perhaps fairly clear. Rhymed verse mutilates and cramps poetry. It is impossible for even the greatest poet completely to rise above its limitations. He may succeed in a measure, but that is due to his strength and not to the useless fetters he wears. But, say the defenders of the fetters, rhyme and meter are excellent disciplines. Does Poetry or does the Poet need to be disciplined? Are they cringing slaves who cannot be trusted to walk alone and unbound? These are obvious things, but one must sometimes be obvious when speaking to those who still

possess a childish belief. Poetry is not determined by the monotonous form in which it is usually clothed, but by the strength or weakness of its voice. Because men have foolishly placed this voice in the mouth of a child, wearing a dress with so many checks on it, and a hat the blackness of which matches the ebony of its ugly shoes, it does not necessarily follow that the voice becomes miraculously changed when placed in some other mouth, whose owner wears a different garb. Then there is the rhythm difficulty. If the little child, Rhyme and Meter, does not swing his foot in time to what he is saying, adding rhythm, his words, according to some, change from poetry to prose. What delightful superstitions!

Poets can undoubtedly rise to great heights, in spite of the fact that they must replace stronger words with weaker ones, because “passion” does not rhyme with “above,” but “love” does. But how much higher could they rise if they were free? I do not say that to eliminate rhyme, meter, and rhythm is to make the way absolutely clear. The Poet must still be a Poet to climb. Nor do I say that if the Poet finds that rhyme, rhythm, and meter happen almost to fit his poetic thoughts, he must not use them. I only say that the poet who finds that the usual forms of poetry confine and mar his poetic thoughts should be able to discard them without receiving the usual chorus of sneers, and that if he does he is not miraculously changed from a poet to a writer of prose.

Harriet Monroe's Poetry

EUNICE TIETJENS

*_You and I_*, by Harriet Monroe. [The Macmillan Company, New York.]

Right here in Chicago, under our very noses, there is dwelling personified a Real Force. It is done up in a neat and compact little package, as most real forces are that are not of the Krupp variety, and it works with so little fuss and fury that it takes some discernment to recognize it for a force at all. Nevertheless it is a power which is felt throughout the length and breadth of the country, in California, in Florida, in Canada, and in England. And wherever it is felt it is a liberating force, a force that ruthlessly shatters the outworn conventions of the art in which it operates, that tears away the tinsel trappings and bids art and beauty spring forth clean and untrammelled, to forge for themselves new forms that shall be fitting for the urge of today.

The name by which this force is known in every day parlance is Miss Harriet Monroe, and its manifestations are twofold—as poet and as editor. As editor she has created and kept alive the courageous little magazine *Poetry: A Magazine of Verse*, which might almost, so far as

Chicago is concerned, be called the spiritual older sister of THE LITTLE REVIEW. It, too, in its own field, stands for the revolt of today against the hide-bound spirit of yesterday, and it, too, is a thorn in the side of the Philistines.

The most recent manifestation of Miss Monroe's influence is, however, in her character as poet. She has collected together a large number of poems, most of which have already appeared in the leading magazines and have been widely copied, and has brought them out under the title *_You and I_*. Seeing them so collected, one is much better able to get a perspective on the poems themselves, and on the very interesting personality behind them. And they bulk large. Unquestionably this is one of the most important of the recent books of poetry.

*_You and I_* is essentially modern in spirit and in treatment. Miss Monroe has the power of looking with the eyes of the imagination at many of our modern institutions. *_The Hotel_*, *_The Turbine_*, *_The Panama Canal_*, *_The Ocean Liner_*—these are some of the subjects she treats with a real understanding and a sweep of vision that quite transfigures these work-a-day objects. And she is equally at home when writing of the great emotional complexity of *_State Street at Night_* or the simpler but more profound poignancy of the *_Elegy for a Child_*. Indeed, one of the noticeable things about the book is the unusually large range of themes treated.

There is also in this book the primal, but unfortunately rare, gift of wonder. This is one of the essential qualities of true poetry, and it furnishes Miss Monroe with the key-note of the book, an open-eyed, courageous facing of fate, and an unshakable belief in the redeeming power of beauty.

This little lyric may serve as an introduction to the spirit of the book:

THE WONDER OF IT

*How wild, how witch-like weird that life should be!
That the insensate rock dared dream of me,
And take to bursting out and burgeoning—
Oh, long ago—yo ho!—
And wearing green! How stark and strange a thing
That life should be!*

*Oh mystic mad, a rigadon of glee,
That dust should rise, and leap alive, and flee
Afoot, awing, and shake the deep with cries—
Oh, far away—yo hay!
What moony mask, what arrogant disguise*

That life should be!

Scharmél Iris: Italian Poet

MILO WINTER

Scharmél Iris, the first of the Italians in America to write poetry in English is a Florentine who was brought to Chicago when but an infant. Before his tenth year his poems attracted attention and were warmly praised by such men as Ruskin, Swinburne and Gosse. Later Francis Thompson and Richard Le Gallienne expressed appreciation. These poems which originally appeared in leading publications of England and America are gathered together for the first time and printed by the Ralph Fletcher Seymour Company (Fine Arts Building, Chicago; \$1.00 net). The volume, entitled *Lyrics of a Lad*, contains his most desirable and characteristic lyrics and is a serious contribution to our poetic literature. These poems came to be respected as art through their freshness and originality—there are no trite, worn-out, meaningless phrases, or words of an abstract, generalized significance. Immortal beauty is a vision in his eyes and a passion in his heart, and he has labored to reveal it to the world. Art is a creation of men's minds, and because Mr. Iris's creation is direct and spontaneous it becomes greater art. This volume is not post-Mil tonic or post-Swinburnian or post-Kiplonian. This young poet has the good sense to speak naturally and to paint things as he sees them. Because this book is Scharmél Iris it is distinctive. It is without sham and without affectation. The announcement of its publication and his poems in *THE LITTLE REVIEW* brought the publisher three-hundred orders. The book, slender and well-printed, has more real poetry than any volume of modern verse it has been our good fortune to read.

It is difficult to do an important book justice in a short article. Perhaps a miscellaneous quotation of lines will help:

*The thrush spills golden radiance
From boughs of dusk;*

The day was a chameleon;

*In sweat and pangs the pregnant, Night
Brings forth the wondrous infant, Light;*

*Within the sunset-press, incarnadine,
The sun, a peasant, tramples out his wine;*

You are the body-house of lust;

*Where twilight-peacocks lord the place
Spendthrifts of pride and grace;*

*And lo, at Heaven's blue-windowed house
God sets the moon for lamp;*

*The sunbeams sought her hair,
And rested there;*

These mute white Christs—the daily crucified;

*Lucretia Borgia fair
The poppy is.*

The sunbeams dance in dawn's ballet;

*While sunset-panthers past her run
To caverns of the Sun;*

When from the husk of dusk I shake the stars;

*O dusk, you brown cocoon,
Release your moth, the moon,*

*Ah, since that night
When to her window, she came forth as light,
Have I been Beauty's acolyte;*

and there are many other striking lines. In *The Visionary* a poet steals the pennies on a dead man's eyes to buy himself bread, and, after his death, the money denied him in life is in turn placed on his sightless eyes. It is irony of the bitterest sort. *Late January* is an excellent landscape—interpretive rather than descriptive.

Scarlet—White is struck at the double standard, and is a strong and powerful utterance. *April*, *Canzonette*, *Lady of the Titian Hair* are exquisite and charming lyrics. Three graceful compositions are *The Heart-Cry of the Celtic Maid*, *Tarantella* and *Song for a Rose*. *The Ugly Woman* will cause discussion, but it is good art. The trio of *Spring Songs* and *Her Room* are well nigh perfect. *Mary's Quest* is very tender, as is also the *Twilight Lullaby*. *The Leopard*, *Fantasy of Dusk and Dawn*, *The Forest of the Sky* are wonderfully imaginative, and were written in Chicago,—in the grime and barrenness of Halsted Street. There is a poignant thing of five lines, a mother who is going blind over the death of a son. Her despair is hopeless and tragic—she makes a true and awful picture of realism in her grief. *Heroes* treats of the nameless heroes, daily met and overlooked. The love poems are sincere as all love poems must be. In *Foreboding* the note of sadness is emphatic—almost dominant; but there is more than mere sadness in it;

it is not a minor note. It is tragedy, really, that speaks in such poetry:

*Her cold and rigid hands
Will be as iron bands
Around her lover's heart;*

and

*O'er thee will winter through the sky's gray sieve
Sift down his charity of snow.*

The Mad Woman (printed in Poetry) is as excellent as it is unusual, and few finer things have been done in any literature.

There is a fine flowing harmony about the poetry of Scharmel Iris that denotes a power far beyond that revealed by many of today's singers. The poems are colorful and certainly musical and they display an adequate technique. Such a gift as his, revealed in a number of very fine achievements, gives promise of genuine greatness. After many years of discouragement and the hardest work, he has at last found a publisher who bears the cost of the edition, purely on the merit of the work. It contains a preface by Dr. Egan, American minister in Copenhagen, an attractive title-page decoration by Michele Greco, and a photogravure portrait of the author. By advancing the work of living poets like Mr. Iris one can repay the debt he owes to the old poets. This poetry (as THE LITTLE REVIEW remarked) is not merely the sort which interests or attracts; it remains in your mind as part of that art treasure-house which is your religion and your life.

The Poetry of T. Sturge Moore

In an early number of THE LITTLE REVIEW a correspondent remarked that an article I had the honor of contributing sounded a rather curious note inasmuch as it was a piece of pure criticism in a magazine deliberately given over to exuberance.

Well, it is now my turn to stand up for exuberance as against a contributor, A. M., who gives the poetry of T. Sturge Moore criticism only, and, in my humble opinion, criticism as unfair as would be a description of Notre Dame rendered altogether in terms of gargoyles and their relative positions.

Would it not be more in the spirit of THE LITTLE REVIEW to point out in the title poem of Mr. Moore's book, The Sea is Kind, such passages as the two following:

_Eucritos _—

*Thou knowest, Menalcas,
I built my hut not sheltered but exposed,
Round not right-angled.
A separate window like a mouth to breathe,
No matter whence the breeze might blow,—
A separate window like an eye to watch
From off the headland lawn that prompting wink
Of Ocean musing “Why,” wherever he
May glimpse me at some pitiable task.
Long sea arms reach behind me, and small hills
Have waded half across the bay in front,
Dividing my horizon many times
But leaving every wind an open gate.*

.....

*There is a sorcery in well loved words:
But unintelligible music still
Probes to the buried Titan in the heart
Whose strength, the vastness of forgotten life,
Suffers but is not dead;
Tune stirs him as no thought of ours nor aught
Mere comprehension grasps, can him disquiet.*

And these are parts of a dramatic poem full of fresh figures, colorful glimpses of the romance of ancient life, and what a school-boy would describe as a “perfectly corking” description of a sea fight with dead men slowly dropping through the green water—

*As dead bird leaf-resisted
Shot on tall plane tree’s top,
Down, never truly stopping,
Through green translucence dropping,
They often seemed to stop.*

And how, again could any thorough searcher of this book fail to mention that delightful recipe for wine “Sent From Egypt with a Fair Robe of Tissue to a Sicilian Vine-dresser, 276 B. C.” And surely no obscurity nor any uncouthness of figure—such as your critic objects to, as if poets did not have the faults of their virtues—mar those beautiful child poems:

*That man who wishes not for wings,
Must be the slave of care;
For birds that have them move so well
And softly through the air:
They venture far into the sky,*

If not so far as thoughts or angels fly.

Were William Cory making a prediction rather than “An Invocation” when he ended his poem of that title with the line:

Two minds shall flow together, the English and the Greek.

I would feel like nominating Mr. T. Sturge Moore as its fulfillment.

LLEWELLYN JONES.

Amy Lowell's Contribution

—Sword Blades and Poppy Seed—, by Amy Lowell. [The Macmillan Company, New York.]

... And Amy Lowell's new volume of verse refutes all the critical disparagement of *—vers libre—*, imagism, or “unrhymed cadence,” as Miss Lowell herself chooses to call her work. For she demonstrates that it is something new—that it is a clear-eyed workmanship which belongs distinctly to this keener age of ours. Miss Lowell's technical debt to the French—to the so-called Parnassian school—has been paid in a poetical production that will put to shame our hackneyed and slovenly “accepted” poets. Most of the poems in her book are written in *—vers libre—*, and this is the way Miss Lowell analyzes them: “They are built upon ‘organic rhythm,’ or the rhythm of the speaking voice with its necessity for breathing, rather than upon a strict metrical system. They differ from ordinary prose rhythms by being more curved and containing more stress. The stress, and exceedingly marked curve, of any regular metre is easily perceived. These poems, built upon cadence, are more subtle, but the laws they follow are not less fixed. Merely chopping prose lines into lengths does not produce cadence; it is constructed upon mathematical and absolute laws of balance and time. In the preface to his *Poems*, Henley speaks of ‘those unrhyming rhythms in which I had tried to quintessentialize, as (I believe) one scarce can do in rhyme.’ The desire to ‘quintessentialize,’ to head-up an emotion until it burns white-hot, seems to be an integral part of the modern temper, and certainly ‘unrhymed cadence’ is unique in its power of expressing this.”

Take Miss Lowell's *—White and Green—*, for example:

*Hey! My daffodil-crowned,
Slim and without sandals!
As the sudden spurt of flame upon darkness
So my eyeballs are startled with you,
Supple-limbed youth among the fruit-trees,*

*Light runner through tasselled orchards.
You are an almond flower unsheathed
Leaping and flickering between the budded branches.*

Or *Absence* :

*My cup is empty tonight,
Cold and dry are its sides,
Chilled by the wind from the open window.
Empty and void, it sparkles white in the moonlight.
The room is filled with the strange scent
Of wistaria blossoms.
They sway in the moon's radiance
And tap against the wall.
But the cup of my heart is still,
And cold, and empty.*

*When you come, it brims
Red and trembling with blood,
Heart's blood for your drinking;
To fill your mouth with love
And the bitter-sweet taste of a soul.*

—M. C. A.

Star Trouble

Helen Hoyt

*A little star
Came into the heaven
At the close of even.
It seemed not very far,
And it was young and soft.
But the gray
Got in its way,
So that I longed to reach my hand aloft
And push the clouds by
From its little eye,
From its little soft ray.*

Parasite

Conrad Aiken

*Nine days he suffered. It was in this wise.—
He, being scion to Homer in our time,
Must needs be telling tales, in prose or rhyme;
He was a pair of large blue hungry eyes.
Money he had, enough to live in ease;—
Drank wine occasionally; would often sit—
Child and critic alternate—in the Pit:
Cheap at a half-crown he thought feasts like these.
Plays held him by the throat—and cinemas too—
They blanched his face and made him grip his seat;
And oh, fine music to his soul was sweet—
He said, “His ears towards that music grew!”
And he kept watch with stars night after night,
Spinning tales from the little of life he knew.—
Of modern life he was the parasite.*

*Subtle his senses were—yea, like a child,
Sudden his spirit was to cry or laugh;
Strange modern blending of the tame and wild;
As sensitive to life as seismograph.
His sympathies were keen and sweet and quick,
He could play music subtly in your mood;
Raw life, to him, was often strange and rude—
Slight accidents could make him white and sick.
Unreasoning, but lovable was he;—
Men liked him, he was brave; and yet withal
When brute truth stunned him, he could cringe and crawl;
When most he loved the world, he least could see.
Now let him speak himself, as he well can,
In his queer modern style of poesy.—
Then judge him, you, as poet and as man.*

* * * * *

*There was a woman lived by Bloomsbury Square,—
She was not all that womankind can be,—
Yet she was good to me, I thought her fair;—
I loved her, she was all the world to me;
O, I was adoration, she divine,
And star or moon could not so sweetly shine.*

*I will say little—it was neither's fault—
Yet to a bitter time my loving came,
A time of doubt, of faltering, of halt,*

*A time of passionate begging and of shame,
When I threw all life's purpose at her feet,
And she stood strange to me, and cold and sweet—*

*Child that I was! for when it came, that hour,
It was in no wise as my heart had thought—
For comic devils had me in their power,
She laughed at me, we wrangled, and I fought,
And there was hot breath gasped in murderous words....
It was at dusk, when sweetly sang the birds....*

*Then there was silence—oh, how still and cold!
Without good-bye I went; for she had said—
“Young fool!”—that was a rapier-turn that told;
I could have killed her, for she knew I bled—
And smiled a little, as I turned away;
We have not known each other since that day.*

*I had expected, if my love went wrong,
The world in sympathy; I suffered pain
That evening when I heard the birds in song,
And stars swam out, and there was no hope for rain,
And the air was dense with lilac-sweet.... I walked
In sullen way; fierce with my soul I talked—;*

*And knew what knave I was; yet I devised,
Being still too angry for sincerer grief,
Some pain,—appropriate for a soul despised,—
In simulated venom crushed a leaf,—
And glared at strangers, thinking I would kill
Any that dared to thwart my casual will.*

*So, passing through dark streets, with heedless eyes,
I came upon a beggar, who had drawn
Pictures, upon the stones, of ships, and skies;
The moonlight lay upon them, grey and wan—
And they seemed beautiful, alive they seemed;
Beside them, cap in hand, their maker dreamed.*

*Above him there a long, long while I stood,
Striving to go, like dream-stuff, to his heart;
Striving to pierce his infinite solitude,
To be of him, and of his world, a part;
I stood beside his seas, beneath his skies,
I felt his ships beneath me dip and rise;*

*I heard his winds go roaring through tall trees,
Thunder his sails, and drive the lifted spray;
I heard the sullen beating of his seas;*

*In a deep valley, at the end of day,
I walked through darkness green along with him,
And saw the little stars, by moon made dim,*

*Peer softly through the dusk, the clouds between,
And dance their dance inviolable and bright;
Aloft on barren mountains I have seen
With him the slow recession of the night,
The morning dusk, the broad and swimming sun,
And all the tree-tops burn, and valleys run*

*With wine of daybreak; he and I had kept
Vigil with stars on bitter frosty nights:
The stars and frost so burned, we never slept,
But cursed the cold, and talked, and watched the lights
Down in the valleys, passing to and fro,
Like large and luminous stars that wandered slow...*

*Rising at dawn, those times, we had no fire,—
And we were cold,—O bitter times were those,—
And we were rained on, and we walked through mire,
Or found a haystack, there to lie and doze;
Until at evening, with a let of rain,
We shivered awake, and limped, with crying pain,*

*To farms, and begged a meal.... if they were kind
We warmed ourselves, and maybe were allowed
The barn to sleep in.... I was nearly blind,
Sometimes, with need to sleep—sometimes so cowed
By pain and hunger that for weeks on end
I'd work in the fields,—and maybe lose my friend:*

*Live steady for a while and flesh my bones,
And reap or plough, or drive the cattle home,
And weed the kitchen patch, and pile up stones;
But always it must end, and I must roam;
One night, as still as stars, I rose, was gone,
They had no trace of me at come of dawn,*

*And I was out once more in wind and weather,
Brother of larks and leaves and dewy ferns,
Friends of the road I had, we begged together,
And slept together, and tended fire by turns:
O, they were rare times, bitter times were they,
Winding the open road day after day!*

*And then I came to London.... Sick, half dead,
Crossing a street I shocked with dizzy pain,
With fury of sound, and darkness ... then in bed*

*I woke; there was a long white counterpane;
I heard, impassively, the doctors talk.
From that day, without crutch, I could not walk.*

*O, the sick-hearted times that took me then!
The days, like vultures, sat to watch me dying.
It seemed as if they lived to feed on men.
I found no work, it seemed so useless trying.
And I got sick of hearing doorbells ring:
Begging in London was a hopeless thing.*

*Once I had driven: I tried to get a job
At driving 'busses, but there wasn't any;
Sometimes, by washing wheels, I earned a bob;
Sometimes held horses for a stingy penny;
And it was hard to choose between the bed
That penny paid for, and a bite of bread.*

*Often I hid in parks, and slept on benches,
After the criers had wailed and passed me by;
And it was cold, but better than the stench
Of ten men packed in one room like a sty.
Twice, I was caught and jailed. It wasn't bad,
Come to think of the cot and bread I had.*

*But O the weariness, day in, day out,
Watching the people walking on so cold,
So full of purpose, deaf to even a shout,—
It was their utter heedlessness that told;
It made me white at heart and sick with hate.
Some guiltily looked away; some walked so straight*

*They never knew I lived, but trod my shadow,
Brushed at the laces that I tried to sell....
O God, could I but then have seen a meadow,
Or walked erect in woods, it had been well,
These wretched things I might have then forgiven,
Nor spread my shadow betwixt them and heaven....*

*I failed at hawking.... somehow, I never sold....
I wasn't shaped for it by Him that makes.
I tried with matches, toys, sham studs of gold,—
I failed; it needs a fakir to sell fakes.
The bitter pennies that I saved for buying
Were going to hell, and my whole soul was dying.*

*I tried to steal a sleep, without my penny,
One night at John's. I hadn't fed all day.
It was a shrewish winter night, and rainy.*

*John found me out and swore. I said I'd pay
Next afternoon, or die—he said I'd die....
O, I was longing for a place to lie!...*

*He pushed me to the door and opened it,
His stinking arm was smothered round my face,
And then I raged and swung my crutch and hit,
He only laughed and knocked me into space.
When I came to, Joe Cluer bathed my head,
And he had paid my penny, so he said.*

*Joe Cluer was a man—God help him now,
Pneumonia got him down last year and took him.
But he had colored chalks, and taught me how
To draw on stones; sometimes the d.t.'s shook him
So hard he couldn't draw, himself, but show
The way it's done.... That's how I made a go.*

*And we'd steal out together, he and I,
And draw before the crowds began to come.
At first he helped me. But as time went by
Drink made him worse, and I would help him some:
I drew him six on paper, in the end,
And he would take them out, and just pretend*

*To draw a little on the dewy stones....
But it was useless, for the stones were wet,
And he just wasted chalk, and chilled his bones,
His hand shook ... O, I can see him yet ...
Cramping his fingers down with hellish pain
To write out "My Own Talent," large and plain.*

*Sometimes, to go out early, it was fun,
When it was not too cold, on autumn days
When leaves were rustling downward, and the sun
Came rising red and paley through the haze....
The streets were fairly quiet, the people few,
There was a smell of dead leaves damp with dew...*

*And I'd draw, singing, places I had seen,
The places that I walked when I was free,
And of my colors best I loved the green,—
O, it would break my heart to draw a tree
Growing in fields, and shaking off the sun,
With cattle standing under, one and one....*

*And roads I loved to draw,—the white roads winding
Away up, beautifully, through blue hills;
Queer, when I drew them I was always minding*

*The happy things, forgetting all the ills,
And I'd think I was young again, and strong,
Rising at smell of dawn to walk along....*

*To walk along in the cool breath of dawn,
Through dusk mysterious with faint song of birds....
Out of the valleys, mist was not yet gone,—
Like sleeping rivers; it were hard for words
To say that quiet wonder, and that sleep,
And I alone, walking along the steep,*

*To see and love it, like the God who made!...
And I would draw the sea—when I was young
I lived by sea. Its long slow cannonade
Sullen against the cliffs, as the waves swung,
I heard now, and the hollow guttural roar
Of desolate shingle muttering down the shore....*

*And the long swift waves unfurled in smother of white,
Snow, streaked with green, and sea-gulls shining high,—
And their keen wings,—I minded how, in flight,
They made a whimpering sound; and the clean sky,
Swept blue by winds—O what would I have given
To change this London pall for that sweet heaven!*

*And I kept thinking of a Devon village
That snuggled in a sea-side deep ravine,
With the tall trees above, and the red tillage,
And little houses smothered soft in green,
And the fishers talking, biding for the tides,
And mackerel boats all beached upon their sides.*

*And it was pleasure edged with lightning pain
To draw these things again in colored chalk,
And I would sometimes think they lived again,
And I would think “O God, if I could walk,
It's little while I'd linger in this street
Giving my heart to bitterly wounding feet....”*

*And shame would gnaw me that I had to do it.
O there were moments when I could have cried
To draw the thing I loved—and yet, I drew it;
But how I longed to say I hadn't lied,
That I had been and seen it, that I wanted
To go again, that through my dreams it haunted,*

*That it was lovely here, but lovelier far
Under its own sky, sweet as God had made.
It hurt me keenly that I had to mar*

*With gritty chalk, and smutchy light and shade,
On grimy pavings, in a public square,
What shone so purely yonder in soft air!*

*And yet I drew—year after year I drew;
Until the pictures, that I once so loved,
Though better drawn, seemed not of things I knew,
But dreamed perhaps; my heart no longer moved;
And it no longer mattered if the rain
Wiped out what I had drawn with so much pain.*

*I only care to find the best-paid places,
To get there first and get my pictures done,
And then sit back and hate the pallid faces,
And shut my eyes to warm them, if there's sun,
And get the pennies saved for harder times,—
Winter in London is no joke, by crimes.*

*It's hellish cold. Your hands turn blue at drawing.
You're cramped; and frost goes cutting to your bones.
O you would pray to God for sun and thawing
If you had sat and dithered on these stones,
And wanted shoes and not known how to get them,
With these few clothes and winter rains to wet them.*

*You come and try it, you just come and try!
O for one day if you would take my place!
If we could only change once, you and I,
You, with your soft white wrists and delicate face!
One day of it, my man, and like Joe Cluer,
Pneumonia'd get you and you'd die, that's sure.*

*O God, if on dark days you yet remember
So small and base a thing as I, who pray,
Though of myself I am but now the ember—
For my great sorrows grant me this, that they
Who look upon me may be shaken deep
By sufferings; O let me curse their sleep,*

*A devil's dance, a demon's wicked laughter;—
To haunt them for a space; so they may know
How sleek and fat their spirits are; and after,
When they have prospered of me, I will go;
Grant me but this, and I am well content.
Then strike me quickly, God, for I am spent.*

*Yet,—lift me from these streets before I die.
For the old hunger takes me, and I yearn
To go where swelling hills are, and blue sky,*

*And slowly walk in woods, and sleep in fern;
To wake in fern, and see the larks go winging,
Vanish in sunlight, and still hear them singing!*

*So die; and leave behind me no more trace
Than stays of chalkings after night of rain;
Even myself, I hardly know their place
When I go back next day to draw again;
Only the withered leaves, which the rain beat,
And the grey gentle stones, with rain still sweet.*

* * * * *

*So for nine days I suffered this man's curse,
And lived with him, and lived his life, and ached;
And this vicarious suffering was far worse
Than my own pain had been.... But when I waked,
His pain, my sorrow, were together flown;
My grief had lived and died; and the sun shone.*

*There was a woman lived by Bloomsbury Square—
She is no more to me; I could not sorrow
To think, I loved this woman, she was fair;
All grief I had was grief that I could borrow—
A beggar's grief. With him, all these long years,
I lived his life of wretchedness and tears.*

The Prophecy of Gwic'hlan

(_Translated by Edward Ramos from the French of Hersart de la Villemarque _)

I

*When the sun sets, when the sea snores, I sing upon the sill of my
door.
When I was young, I used to sing; and I still sing who am grown old.
I sing of the night, of the day, and none the less I am discontent.
If my head is low, if I am discontented, it is not without cause.
It is not that I am afraid; I am not afraid to be killed.
It is not that I am afraid; I have lived long enough.
When one does not look for me, I am found; and when one looks for me, he
finds me not.
Little import that which advenes: that which ought to be will be.
And one must die three times, before he come to repose.*

II

*I see the wild-boar that comes out of the wood; he drinks very much,
and he has a wounded foot.
His jaws are drooping, blood-covered, and his bristles are whitened with
age.
He is followed by his tribe, grunting from hunger.[5]
The sea-horse[6] comes to meet him; he makes the river banks tremble in
horror.
He is as white as the brilliant snow; he has silver horns on his
forehead.
The water boils under him from the thunder-fire of his nostrils.
Other sea-horses surround him, close packed as herbs by a swamp.
"Hold fast! hold fast! sea-horse; hit him on the head; hit hard, hit!
The bare feet slip in the blood! harder! have at them! harder!
I see blood flowing like a river! hit hard! hit them! strike harder!
I see the blood rise to his knees! I see blood like a lake!
Harder! have at them! harder! Thou may'st rest thyself tomorrow.
Hit hard! Hit hard, sea-horse! Hit him on the head! Hit hard! Hit!"*

[5] Wild-boar and his brood—the men of Bretagne and their leader.

[6] Sea-horse—the Norsemen.

III

*As I lay soft wrapt in sleep in my cold tomb, I heard the eagle call
in the midst of the night.
He summoned his brood and all the birds of the heavens.
He said to them in calling:
"Rise you quickly upon your two wings!
It is not of the rotten flesh of dogs or of sheep; it is of the flesh of
Christians that we will be eating!"
"Old sea-crow, listen; tell me—what do you hold there?"
"I hold the head of the Chief of the Army; I wish to have his two red
eyes.
I tear out his two eyes, because he has torn out thine own."
"And you, fox, tell me—what do you hold there?"
"I hold his heart, which was false as mine is;
The heart which desired your death, and long ago plotted your death."
"And you, tell me, Toad, what do you there, at the corner of his mouth?"
"I, I am put here to await his soul in passage:
It will remain in me as long as I shall live in punishment for the crime
he has committed against the Bard who no longer lives between
Roc'allaz and Porzguenn."*

Editorials and Announcements

Rupert Brooke on the War

In her Letter from London two months ago Miss Amy Lowell made a reference to Harold Munro's Poetry Book Shop in London which may have seemed a little unfair to people who know the high aim of Mr. Munro in that undertaking of his. Miss Lowell did not intend it to be so; in fact she plans for an early number of THE LITTLE REVIEW an article which shall set forth the interesting work that is being done there. In the meantime we have been shown a letter from Robert Brooke, one of the Poetry Book Shop group, which is certainly not open to the charge of "preciousness". Mr. Brooke is in the War; he is a Naval Sub-Lieutenant for service on land, attached to the Second Naval Battalion and was sent with the relief force to Antwerp "just too late". The letter reads: "There I saw a city bombarded and a hundred thousand refugees, sat in the trenches, marched all night, and did other typical and interesting things. Now we're back for more training. I will probably get out again by Christmas.... There's nothing to say, except that the tragedy of Belgium is the greatest and worst of any country for centuries. It's ghastly for anyone who liked Germany as well as I did.... I'm afraid fifty years won't give them the continuity and loveliness of life back again! Most people are enlisting. — and his brother have gone into cavalry; I'm here: among my fellow officers being Denis Brown, one of the best musicians in England; Kelly, the pianist who won the Diamond Sculls; one of the Asquiths; a man who has been mining in the Soudan; a New Zealander—an Olympic swimmer; an infinitely pleasant American youth, called —, who was hurriedly naturalized "to fight for justice" ... and a thousand more oddities. In the end, those of us who come back will start writing great new plays." Our London correspondent, Mr. E. Buxton Shanks, sends a note with infinite pathos in it. "I enclose a letter for December," he writes. "Unfortunately it may be my last. The greater part of my regiment went to France last Monday and I expect to follow it before long, so that this may be not only my last Letter to THE LITTLE REVIEW, but also my last piece of literature for ever and ever."

Winter Rain

Eunice Tietjens

*Winter now has come again;
All the gentle summer rain
Has grown chill, and stings like pain,
And it whispers of things slain,
Love of mine.*

*I had thought to bury love,
All the ways and wiles thereof
Buried deep and buried rough—
But it has not been enough,
Heart of mine.*

*Though I buried him so deep,—
Tramped his grave and piled it steep,
Strewed with flowers the aching heap,—
Yet it seems he cannot sleep,
Soul of mine.*

*And the drops of winter rain,
In the grave where he is lain
Drip and drip, and sting like pain,
Till my love grows live again,
Life of mine!*

A Miracle

Charles Ashleigh

*If the gods of Greece walked abroad,
The sun blazing their splendor to all eyes,
It would not amaze me.*

*If the court of Solomon, the king,
In clashing storm of color,
Were to descend into the murk of the city,
I should not be surprised.*

*For I have conversed with a stripped soul
And its grandeur and wonder have filled me.*

London Letter

E. Buxton Shanks

—London, September 29th.—

Enough of war poetry. An industrious statistician has calculated that three thousand pieces have been printed since the beginning of August. When our poets are unanimous in the choice of a subject, their unanimity is horrible. We have had lyrical outrages from railway porters, dairymen, postmen, road scavengers, and what not, with their names and professions duly appended, in the delectable fashion set some time ago by *The English Review*. Meanwhile, in France, young poets are killing one another. We must arrange a balance-sheet of gains and losses when the war is done. M. Charles Péguy is gone already; that is a loss which makes one fear for Jules Romains and the rest who must be at the front in one army or the other. The French and German casualty lists are not published in the English papers: when the smoke clears off again the arts of the continent will show a different complexion.

Meanwhile we are beginning to ask, prematurely of course, what effect the war will have indirectly on our own arts. The war of '70 caused an epoch of literary ferment in Germany and was at the back of much good poetry. To that war we owe Detter von Liliencron, Richard Dehmel, and Gerhart Hauptmann, who is, I freely admit, a great dramatist, though I cannot abide him. In France it produced the tired subtleties of Kahn, Régnier, and the other Symbolists. In Austria, a century of humiliation, which has become almost a national habit, has evolved the tired elegance of Hofmannsthal and the weary tenderness of Schnitzler who is so obviously so sorry for all his characters as almost to make the reader weep with him. If we win this war, what may we expect? We can be certain that the English arts will react to the strain: the reaction will not necessarily be a good one, unless the efforts of those who sit about at home and vulgarize war are neutralized or ignored. The tone of our newspapers—and these mould our minds, whether we like it or not—is now most insufferably ugly. And as a result of victory, I fear a blatant hollow tone of exultation in our poetry that—from a literary and social standpoint—is almost worse than the languors of defeat. It will be well if we achieve victory when every person in the country has been made to feel the cost of it. Three days knee-deep in flooded trenches—our arts must draw strength from that dreadful experience.

It is true perhaps that we do wish to feel the cost. We are supposed to live in fear of a Zeppelin raid. In my opinion, half the inhabitants of London constantly though secretly hope it. We feel that with a bomb or two tumbling about our heads we shall be “in it.” To read the newspapers

is like having a surfeit of the kind of book which is called “The Great War of 19—.” I have read dozens of them and they move my imagination almost as much as the reports—some of them, such as are well-written, like Mr. Wells’s *War in the Air*, even more.

The result that we must pray for is a greater concreteness and reality in our writing. We have developed an inhuman literary point of view which is fundamentally insincere and which is never more ugly or less convincing than when our poets try to be “modern.” Such poets as Emile Verhaeren—now a refugee in London—treat factories and so forth, the typical products, they think, of modern life, purely as romantic apparitions, much as the romantic writers treated mountains and deserts, excuses for rhetoric and flamboyant description. They have never felt the reality of them, because modern life in its rapidity has outdistanced the poet’s mind in his attempt to conceive it.

I hold no brief for “modern poetry” in that sort of sense: I do not hold it necessary to write about these things. But if you will compose upon a factory or a railway-station, you must feel what factories and railway-stations really are; you must not take refuge in a romantic description of lights and roaring machinery. The perpetually breaking high note of the Futurists is merely a rather useless attempt to deal with a difficulty that we all know. Perhaps the war will bring us rather suddenly and jarringly in touch with reality. It is certain that the young men of the class from which literature chiefly comes, have now in their minds a fixed and permanent thought which from time to time comes up onto the surface of consciousness. This thought is the thought of violent death. We have grown physically and morally soft in security; but, as I write, affairs are reaching a crisis in France, fresh regiments are being sent abroad. We each of us wonder which may be the next to go.

This honest and undisguised fear—a man is wonderfully insensitive if he does not feel it and a braggart if he will not admit it—has a powerful and purifying effect on the spirit. Its spiritual action is comparable to that of violent and maintained physical exercise. The flabby weight of our emotions is being reduced and hardened: we have sweated away a great many sick fancies and superfluous notions. The severe pressure of training for war induces in us a love of reason, a taste for hard thinking and exactitude and a capacity for discipline.

The art of war is fortunately an art that allows itself to be definitely judged. Either you win your battles or you lose them. It is of no use to say that Warmser was a great general whose subtle and esoteric methods of making war have never been appreciated by a numskulled public. Napoleon thrashed him and there is an end of argument. A soldier cannot resignedly appeal from the fortunes of the field to the arbitrament of the future.

The consideration of these facts leads us to wish that poetry were in the same case; and we are beginning to feel both that poetry may become a more active factor in normal life than hitherto and that a careful criticism may remove it from the desert space of assertion and undefended preference which it now inhabits. Possibly the war may help to cure us of our ancient English muddle-headedness. We have awakened with surprise to find our army an admirable and workmanlike machine. The South African war rid us, in military affairs, of the incompetent amateur and the obstructive official. Vague rumors of what the army had learnt there even reached other departments of activity: possibly this war will infect us all with a new energy and a new sense of reality. We may learn how to reach our ends by taking thought and by cherishing ideas instead of plunging on in a sublimely obstinate and indisciplined muddle. As for our war-poetry—I must end where I began—it is merely a sloughing of the old skin, a last discharge of the old disease.

The Project Gutenberg eBook of The Little Review, January 1915 (Vol. 1, No. 10), by Various

The Allies

(_August 14th, 1914_)

AMY LOWELL

Into the brazen, burnished sky the cry hurls itself. The zigzagging cry of hoarse throats, it floats against the hard winds, and binds the head of the serpent to its tail, the long snail-slow serpent of marching men. Men weighted down with rifles and knapsacks, and parching with war. The cry jars and splits against the brazen, burnished sky.

This is the war of wars, and the cause? Has this writhing worm of men a cause?

Crackling against the polished sky is an eagle with a sword. The eagle is red and its head is flame.

* * * * *

In the shoulder of the worm is a teacher.

His tongue laps the war-sucked air in drought, but he yells defiance at the red-eyed eagle, and in his ears are the bells of new philosophies, and their tinkling drowns the sputter of the burning sword. He shrieks,

“God damn you! When you are broken the world will strike out new shoots.”

His boots are tight, the sun is hot, and he may be shot, but he is in the shoulder of the worm.

(_ Over _)

A dust speck in the worm’s belly is a poet.

*He laughs at the flaring eagle and makes a long nose with his fingers.
He will fight for smooth, white sheets of paper and uncurdled ink. The
sputtering sword cannot make him blink, and his thoughts are wet and
rippling. They cool his heart.*

*He will tear the eagle out of the sky and give the earth tranquility,
and loveliness printed on white paper.*

** * * * **

The eye of the serpent is an owner of mills.

*He looks at the glaring sword which has snapped his machinery and struck
away his men.*

*But it will all come again, when the sword is broken to a million dying
stars, and there are no more wars.*

** * * * **

*Bankers, butchers, shopkeepers, painters, farmers,—men, sway and sweat.
They will fight for the earth, for the increase of the slow, sure roots
of peace, for the release of hidden forces. They jibe at the eagle and
his scorching sword.*

*One! Two!—One! Two! clump the heavy boots. The cry hurtles against the
sky.*

** * * * **

*Each man pulls his belt a little tighter, and shifts his gun to make it
lighter. Each man thinks of a woman, and slaps out a curse at the eagle.
The sword jumps in the hot sky, and the worm crawls on to the battle,
stubbornly.*

This is the war of wars, from eye to tail the serpent has one cause:

PEACE!

Little Flowers From a Milliner's Box

SADE IVERSON

Reminders

*I have been making a little hat;
A hat for a little lady.
Red and brown leaves edge it,
And the crown is like brown moss.
If I might, I would say to her:
"Pay me nothing, pay me nothing—
I have been paid in full, lady—
I have been paid in memories.
Ah, the sweep of the sun-burned meadow
Rising above the woodland!
Ah, the drift of golden beech-leaves,
Fluttering the still hour through!
I can hear them falling, softly,
Softly, falling on the tawny ground.
The nuts, too, are falling, pad-pad,
Mischievously on the earth.
Never was sky so blue, so deep,
So unbearably perfect!
I throw up my hands to it,
I fling kisses heavenward,
To Something, to Somebody,
Who made beauty—who made Youth!
Take your hat, little lady,
Wear it smilingly;
It is all sewn with dreams,
And looped with memories.
Little dead joys, like mists,
Float about it invisibly,
Making it miraculous.
You lack the money to pay for these things.
It is I who owe you for the little hat
You commissioned, made of red and of brown leaves,
With a crown like sun-dried moss
In the woods where I once wandered."
But I cannot afford to be kind,
Or strange, or mad, or merry.
She will give me purse-worn bills*

*For the little dream hat, the fairy-sewn hat,
And I shall say with formality:
“Thank you, madam; I am glad
You are pleased with the little hat.”*

Stale, stale, flat, flat!

*Will there never again come a day
When I shall be throwing kisses to the sky,
Hoping they will reach up to Him
Who made beauty, and little golden leaves,
And brown nuts falling in the Autumn woods?*

Eidolons

*I have been looking at the sun-ball,
Red as a Japanese lantern
Swinging low in the West
On a bed of saffron sky.
And now I have come into my room
With grey and lonely walls all about me,
And everywhere I look, behold,
Little wonderful bright balls are swinging!
My room is gay with them,
My wall is dancing.
Who could guess this little grey room could be so gay?*

Voices

*I awake in the night to the sound of voices—
Voices of strangers passing in the street.
I cannot hear what they are saying,
But it is easy to see that they are happy.
Perhaps they have been to a party,
Dancing to music—or remembering the birthday
Of some one whom they love.
I am glad to have heard them,
Glad they were laughing.
It fretted the silence
As the bright balls of a rocket
Fret the black sky of night.
As for me, I am shut up in silence,
Like a fly in odorous amber.
No one hails me, no one calls me;
No one tells me the day is fair
Or wishes me happy dreams.*

*Sometimes I fall to wondering,
What if I should run out onto the street,
Crying to some passerby:
"I would make a good friend to you!
I am one who understands friendship;
Try me and see!"*

*Oh, what would happen?
Should I be scorned?
Oh, silence, silence,
You are but a grey bubble, and I could break you
With one breath of impatience. Yet I dare not.
Something withholds me. Still must I waken
In the lonely night-time,
Taking joy from the voices of strangers
Passing in the street, talking, laughing.
Joy?
It mocks me like the sound of falling water
That tricks the ear of the thirst-mad wretch
Dying in the desert.*

*My desert is Silence!
It covers the bleak rotundity of the earth.*

Ten Square Feet of Garden

*Did you ever see my garden? See my mallow? See my larkspur?
My petunias like censers, snowy white and full of honey?
And my phlox, a summer snow-bank, and my haughty purple asters?*

*Did you ever see my flocks and herds, all my little golden
creatures?
Dusky honey-bees in plenty, golden bumble-bees a few?
Have you never seen them feeding on my larkspur and my mallow?*

*Some day I shall have a fountain, or a tiny pool for lilies.
And I'll sit there, hidden safely, all alone and full of fancies,
Playing I'm a lovely princess, resting by her carven fountain.*

*I shall like to be a princess, to have friends and lovers by me!
I can praise them, I can chide them, tell them secrets if I like,
Flinging back their happy laughter like a handful of clear water.*

*Oh, my little treasured garden, ten square feet of haunting perfume,
Ten square feet of tossing blossoms, all my feoff and own dominion,
How I love you, with your old-gold, noisy, honey-bearing herds!*

A Note on Paroxysm in Poetry

EDWARD J. O'BRIEN

Paroxysm is the poetic expression of that modern spirit which finds its most notable expression in other arts in the sculpture of Meunier, the polyphonic music of Strauss, the philosophy of Bergson, and the American skyscraper. It is the application of dynamics to poetry. It stands midway between romanticism, which is an escape into the past, and futurism, which is a flight into the future. Paroxysm is deep-rooted in to-day.

M. Nicolas Beauduin, its most noteworthy French exemplar, has many noteworthy disciples in France and Germany, and paroxysm is a well-known force in every literature except that of America, where its unconscious expression in life has been most remarkable. Students will find its philosophy set forth and its current phases in literature duly chronicled in M. Beauduin's quarterly review, *La Vie des Lettres*. It is only possible here to offer a few very brief hints as to its literary aims and materials:

It aims to be a synthesis of modern industrial and mechanical effort.

It repudiates the ivory tower.

It handles the materials of modern life directly, not in symbols.

It responds to the roar of factories and trains.

The poet is to be "an active lyric," representing his age.

The poet's vision is the cinematograph of modern life with its continual mechanical transfiguration.

It is not sentimental.

To art for art's sake, and art for truth's sake, it opposes art for life's sake.

It discards personal sensation; it is not ashamed to be "cosmic."

The evolution of poetry is to be as rapid and terrible henceforth as material evolution.

*It will sing the new man, the man-machine, the multiplied man,
the Man-Bird.*

It exalts motion and repudiates equilibrium.

It is social.

*It feels the need for violent motives of faith, and finds them in
the passion of the cities.*

It cultivates a scientific technique.

It does not reject any words in forming a vocabulary.

It seeks swift, hurtling, dynamic rhythms.

*It is based on "dynamic notions of qualitative duration, of
heterogeneous continuity, of multiple and mobile states of
consciousness."*

*It perceives the elements of poetry contained in modern cities,
locomotives, aëroplanes, dreadnoughts, and submarines; in a stock
exchange, a Wall Street, or a wheat pit; and in every scientific
marvel and in the sonorous song of factories and railways.*

It emphasizes their dynamic consciousness.

*To sum up: It aims to attain and express with the quick, keen vigor and
strength of steel, the whirling, audacious, burning life of our epoch in
all the paroxysm of the New Beauty.*

When M. Beauduin's new volume, *La Cité des Hommes*, is translated and
published in America, it will be less difficult to estimate the success
with which paroxyst poetry may be achieved.

The New Beauty

Nicolas Beauduin

(_Authorized translation from the French by Edward J. O'Brien_)

*Long years the poet had not understood
This powerful art bursting from forces in sight,
From the tamed element which revolts in cries,
From the victory of the spirit
Over the passive immensity of matter.*

*The modern beauty of joy and madness,
Of triumph and truth,
He saw her, in a passionate rhythm,
Flinging down the palaces of doubt and silence,
Vanquishing black scepticisms and torpors,
Rekindling the universe under her jets of vapor,
Destroying the vain mystery that disappears,
Covering the entire world with her network of iron,
Launching her towers, her bridges, her tunnels, her dockyards,
Over all the exasperated continents of the globe.*

*Ah! the new beauty, ardent, insatiate,
Strained toward conquest and the vastest life,
She was indeed the god whom nothing resists,
Dynamic beauty of swiftness and hope,
Rushing ever beyond, out of the blackness,
Dancing and paroxyst humanity.
He saw her at last, superb before him,
Entrapping error, mowing night;
She erected on the old barbaric soil
Her cathedral with its vertiginous walls,
Lit by the mad and whirling suns of the searchlights.*

*Beauty of brass, beauty of fire,
She was there visible as a god.
Beauty of vapor, geometric beauty,
Modern beauty who builds for her temple and landscape
High furnaces casqued with purple and gold,
Cities mad beneath their electric lamps,
Launching at conquered heaven in spirals of pride,
The rut of dynamos and the bustle of windlasses,
The multiplied brutal effort of the machines,
The fiery flight of aeroplanes in the air,
The frantic trolleys under their sheaves of lightnings,
And dominating the night of silence and hatred,
The terrible thunderous flight of hertzian waves.*

Dawn in the Hills

\Florence Kiper Frank

*Out of the vast,
Flooding and flowering the cool, skyey vast,
Day, day at last!
Squandering, spilling, pouring white-flecked fire,
Higher and higher
The light of the sun mounts into the dim of the sky.
And all the little fields that lie
At the foot of the hills that hold them in mothering tender,
Sweet with translucent, shimmering green,
Lay themselves bare to the sun, and the hill-trees slender,
Upward reaching thin arms of prayer,
A-shiver with ecstasy, tipped with sheen,
Sway to the quivering call of the fresh-stirring air.*

*Through the night have I waited Thy summons, through the night have
I lain
Racked with unutterable, ancient, blackening pain.
And the soul of me touched not Thy presence nor felt Thee about me,
And the soul of me, sick with its hate and dismay, was minded to rout
Thee,
Yea, from itself to tear Thee, enduring without Thee.
But now have I found Thee again, O my Comrade, again!
In the light of the morning and white of the dawn I behold Thee.
See, with my arms outstretched, I enclose and enfold Thee.
With a shout that the darkness is light, I enclose and enfold Thee.*

*Now feed me with life as with rain is nourished the flower!
Crown me with ecstasy, drench me with power!
See, I am bare to Thee as the fields are bare to the sun.
Resplendent, vivid, ever-living One,
This is the moment, this the creative hour!
Lo, I am one with thee,
I partake, I am washed anew.
Out of lies this is true,
Out of the dark of lies and entangling hates this is true,
That Thou who art ever-living, out of death shall create anew.*

*What weakling spirit knew thee gray and old,
Thou flaming one,
Thou fructifying sun,
Thou trumpet-call of morning to the blood,*

*Thou surge of the earth flood!
Youth of the universe art Thou, militant, bold.*

*Naught to Thee is decay,
When the spirit rots in its shroud,
And the horrible thoughts of night have way,
And life is a noisome cloud;
A noisome cloud of the fen,
Dank with the spirit's decay!
O out of the morning laughest Thou then,
Out of the singing day.
Out of the morning leapest Thou,
Laughing at fear and pain,
And the horrible thoughts of night give way,
And the soul is created again.*

*The hills now are flooded with light and the trees rejoice
With happy voice.
The smell of the sweet, green things is in the air.
The breeze is a prayer.
And my soul, O my Comrade, my living soul is a prayer.*

*And rapture gives way to peace.
The dawning faints into the day.
Out of night have I found release,
Out of death, the way.
And my heart is calm with Thee, my heart that went forth with a shout.
Thou hast compassed me wholly about.
With the floods of Thy peace Thou hast compassed me wholly about.
I am elate with power.
Past is the creative hour.
I am calm for the ways of men.
Shall I not proclaim Thee then
To the doubting lives of men!
Out of the dawn have I plucked Thee.
I go to the world of men.*

I Am Woman

Marguerite Swawite

I am woman:

*Old as Lebanon cedars—and far older;
Young as the freshest green shoot
That peeps through the snow in the March time.
My face is turned to the East
Pink with the dawn of my promise;
My hands are clutched from behind
By the fettering fingers of her who was woman alone,
Molded and spurred by desire,
Knowing only the need
Of a kiss for the cup of her throat,
Of a child for the curve of her arm.*

*To-day I am woman,
Less—yet a little more;
For I am learning to sing
Not his, nor another's, but mine own song,
That has lain in my heart since the first day.
A great golden song it shall be
Though not always soft with sweet cadence,
For I must travail to sing:
I am learning
To feed upon nothing, yet fill me;
To warm my chill limbs without fire;
To go on my way, without kiss, without child,
Though my lip is red, my arm willing.
Yet I know I shall never cease
Till I have sung it all—
All to the very last note.*

*Still I shall be woman
In all the long days to come
That beckon to me in the pink dawn;
My song shall grow sweetly familiar,
And he who was frightened shall draw near
Singing his separate song,
Ever his own and yet blending
Its virile strains with mine;
So we shall raise a great harmony
Enfolding the world in our music,
Rejoicing again in our marriage.*

*One day that shall be
But to-day
I am weary—*

The East is rosy with promise of dawn.

(The following is one of the poems in Edgar Lee Master's
"Spoon River Anthology" which has been running in *Reedy's*
St. Louis Mirror and attracting such wide-spread attention.
In our opinion it is in the first ranks of fine poetry.)

Caroline Branson

*With our hearts like drifting suns, had we but walked
As often before the April fields till star-light
Silkened over with viewless gauze the darkness
Under the rock, our trysting place in the wood,
Where the brook turns! Had we but passed from wooing
Like notes of music that run together, into winning
In the inspired improvisation of love!
But to put back of us as a canticle ended
The rapt enchantment of the flesh,
In which our souls swooned, down, down,
Where time was not, nor space, nor ourselves—
Annihilated in love!
To leave these behind for a room with lamps;
And to stand with our Secret mocking itself,
And hiding itself amid flowers and mandolins,
Stared at by all between salad and coffee.
And to see him tremble, and feel myself
Prescient, as one who signs a bond—
Not flaming with gifts and pledges heaped
With rosy hands over his brow.
And then, O night! deliberate! unlovely!
With all of our wooing blotted out by the winning
In a chosen room in an hour that was known to all.
Next day he sat so listless, almost cold,
So strangely changed, wondering why I wept,
Till a kind of sick despair and voluptuous madness
Seized us to make the pact of death.*

*A stalk of the earth sphere,
Frail as star-light,
Waiting to be drawn once again
Into creation's stream.
But next time to be given birth
Gazed at by Raphael and St. Francis
Sometimes as they pass.
For I am their little brother,*

*To be known clearly face to face
Through a cycle of birth hereafter run.
You may know the seed and the soil;
You may feel the cold rain fall.
But only the earth-sphere, only heaven
Knows the secret of the seed
In the nuptial chamber under the soil.
Throw me into the stream again,
Give me another trial—
Save me, Shelley!*

The Project Gutenberg eBook of The Little Review, February 1915 (Vol. 1, No. 11), by Margaret C. Anderson

Poems

AMY LOWELL

Bright Sunlight

*The wind has blown a corner of your shawl
Into the fountain,
Where it floats and drifts
Among the lily-pads
Like a tissue of sapphires.
But you do not heed it,
Your fingers pick at the lichens
On the stone edge of the basin,
And your eyes follow the tall clouds
As they sail over the ilex trees.*

Ely Cathedral

*Anaemic women, stupidly dressed and shod
In squeaky shoes, thump down the nave to laud an expurgated God.
Bunches of lights reflect upon the pavement where
The twenty benches stop, and through the close, smelled-over air
Gaunt arches push up their whited cones,
And cover the sparse worshipers with dead men's stones.
Behind his shambling choristers, with flattened feet
And red-flapped hood, the Bishop walks, complete*

*In old, frayed ceremonial. The organ wheezes
A moldy psalm-tune, and a verger sneezes.*

*But the great Cathedral spears into the sky
Shouting for joy.*

What is the red-flapped Bishop praying for, by the bye?

Green Symphony

John Gould Fletcher

I

*The glittering leaves of the rhododendrons
Balance and vibrate in the cool air;
While in the sky above them
White clouds chase each other.*

*Like scampering rabbits,
Flashes of sunlight sweep the lawn;
They fling in passing
Patterns of shadow,
Golden and green.*

*With long cascades of laughter,
The mating birds dart and swoop to the turf:
'Mid their mad trillings
Glints the gay sun behind the trees.*

*Down there are deep blue lakes:
Orange blossom droops in the water.*

*In the tower of the winds,
All the bells are set adrift:
Jingling
For the dawn.*

*Thin fluttering streamers
Of breeze lash through the swaying boughs,
Palely expectant
The earth receives the slanting rain.*

*I am a glittering raindrop
Hugged close by the cool rhododendron.*

*I am a daisy starring
The exquisite curves of the close-cropped turf.*

*The glittering leaves of the rhododendron
Are shaken like blue green blades of glass,
Flickering, cracking, falling:
Splintering in a million fragments.
The wind runs laughing up the slope
Stripping off handfuls of wet green leaves,
To fling in peoples' faces.
Wallowing on the daisy-powdered turf,
Clutching at the sunlight,
Cavorting in the shadow.*

*Like baroque pearls,
Like cloudy emeralds,
The clouds and the trees clash together;
Whirling and swirling,
In the tumult
Of the spring,
And the wind.*

II

*The trees splash the sky with their fingers,
A restless green rout of stars.*

*With whirling movement
They swing their boughs
About their stems:
Planes on planes of light and shadow
Pass among them,
Opening fanlike to fall.*

*The trees are like a sea;
Tossing;
Trembling,
Roaring,
Wallowing,
Darting their long green flickering fronds up at the sky,
Subsiding,
Spotted with white blossom-spray.*

*The trees are roofs:
Hollow caverns of cool blue shadow,
Solemn arches
In the afternoons.
The whole vast horizon*

*In terrace beyond terrace,
Pinnacle above pinnacle,
Lifts to the sky
Serrated ranks of green on green.*

*They caress the roofs with their fingers,
They sprawl about the river to look into it;
Up the hill they come
Gesticulating challenge:
They cower together
In dark valleys;
They yearn out over the fields.*

*Enamelled domes
Tumble upon the grass,
Crashing in ruin
Quiet at last.*

*The trees lash the sky with their leaves,
Uneasily shaking their dark green manes.*

III

*Far let the voices of the mad wild birds be calling me,
I will abide in this forest of pines.*

*When the wind blows
Battling through the forest,
I hear it distantly,
Like the crash of a perpetual sea.*

*When the rain falls,
I watch silver spears slanting downwards
From pale river-pools of sky,
Enclosed in dark fronds.*

*When the sun shines,
I weave together distant branches till they enclose mighty circles,
I sway to the movement of hooded summits,
I swim leisurely in deep blue seas of air.*

*I hug the smooth bark of stately red pillars
And with cones carefully scattered
I mark the progression of dark dial-shadows
Flung diagonally downwards through the afternoon.*

*This turf is not like turf:
It is a smooth dry carpet of velvet,*

*Embroidered with brown patterns of needles and cones.
These trees are not like trees:
They are innumerable feathery pagoda-umbrellas,
Stiffly ungracious to the wind,
Teetering on red-lacquered stems.*

*In the evening I listen to the winds' lisping,
While the conflagrations of the sunset flicker and clash behind me,
Flamboyant crenelations of glory amid the charred ebony boles.*

*In the night the fiery nightingales
Shall clash and trill through the silence:
Like the voices of mermaids crying
From the sea.*

*Long ago has the moon whelmed this uncompleted temple.
Stars swim like gold fish far above the black arches.*

*Far let the timid feet of dawn fly to catch me:
I will abide in this forest of pines:
For I have unveiled naked beauty,
And the things that she whispered to me in the darkness,
Are buried deep in my heart.*

*Now let the black tops of the pine-trees break like a spent wave,
Against the grey sky:
These are tombs and memorials and temples and altars sunkindled for me.*

The Case of French Poetry

RICHARD ALDINGTON

It is with a feeling of regret and astonishment that I find nearly all my English confrères so opposed to the spirit of French culture, so mistaken in their views, and so curiously ignorant of the real facts of the development of modern French literature.

I am led to this reflection by reading Mr. Shanks's excellent article in your December number. It is a most ungracious task to criticise a man who is about to hazard his life in the service of his country; and I honor Mr. Shanks more than I can express. But if I felt as Mr. Shanks does on the subject of French and German poetry I would not fight at all or I would fight for Germany! To a poet poetry must be the great business of life and, speaking for myself, I would emphatically support the Germans if I thought they were better poets than the French and English! (You will take that rhetorical statement for what it is worth.)

Intellectually about fifty per cent of English people are Germanized without knowing it. I should say the percentage is even higher in America. I believe that no study is considered so frivolous or so suspect in both countries as the study of French art and poetry. And yet—Russia and one or two Anglo-Saxons put aside—the history of the art of the last fifty years is the history of French art. You who have given Whistler to the world do not need me to tell you what French art is. The American painting at a recent Exhibition here was of so high a quality that I felt my respect for the intellectual progress of America greatly increased. I admit freely and regretfully that it was immeasurably better than English painting. That is because most Americans study painting in Paris.

Why don't they sometimes give a look at the poetry of France, for in no country is poetry so cultivated, so well understood, and so honored? Mr. Shanks apparently knows something of German poetry and nothing of French. Of Liliencron I know nothing. But I do know something of Hauptmann, Dehmel, and Stefan Georg. (I have no doubt Mr. Shanks dislikes Georg because the latter got his training in France.) Well, I will cheerfully wager that any more or less fair-minded person would find three equally good poets in France to every one that can be mentioned in Germany.

"Kahn, Régnier, and the other Symbolistes"! What an odd statement! Régnier is a Parnassian and Kahn a nobody. I am not going to write a history of modern French poetry, nor speculate as to the effect of 1870 or the probable effect of 1914 on poetry, especially French poetry. I just want to give some names, and if anyone,—if Mr. Shanks,—can give me half as many German poets of the same calibre, charm, and general technical accomplishment I shall be delighted.

Let us grant that Rimbaud, Verlaine, and the elder Parnassians were products of the period of before 1870. Well, since that disastrous war France has produced the following—I will not say great—delightful and readable poets: Samain, Francis Jammes, Henri de Régnier, Jean Moréas, Paul Fort, Laurent Tailhade, Jules Romains, Remy de Gourmont, Charles Vildrac, Laforgue, Louys (translations), Mallarmé (pre-1870?) and younger men like Guy-Charles Cros, Apollinaire, Castiaux, André Spire,

Carco, Divoire, Jouve, Luc Durtain, and dozens more. I do not mention the Belgians Maeterlinck, Verhaeren, Elskamp, and Rodenbach, nor the two Franco-Americans Vielé Griffin, and Merrill—though they also have considerable reputations. (Did you ever hear of an American who wanted to write German?)

I have quoted off-hand twenty-six names from a period of about forty years. And you must remember that there are scores and scores of names only a little less known, and scores and scores beyond that which I may have missed in my reading.

But I think those few names prove beyond all doubt—and I would like people to read them and contrast them with German poets—that French poetry is the foremost in our age for fertility, originality, and general poetic charm.

It is not hatred of Germany but love of poetry which has called this letter from me. I believe in France in the French tradition. And if there is one thing which can reconcile me to this war it is the fact that England has ranged herself beside France and Belgium, beside the cosmopolite, graceful, humanizing, influences of France and French civilization against the nationalist, narrow, and dehumanizing influences of Berlin. I believe all Englishmen regret that they oppose the gay, cultivated, cosmopolite Austrians; it is a misfortune. But of the great issue between the nations—the great intellectual issue—there can be no doubt. And Mr. Shanks, when he praises (unjustly I firmly believe) the poets of Germany and disparages (equally unjustly) the poets of France, is intellectually on the side of the enemy he is so courageously opposing with physical force. I believe in the kindliness of Germans; I know them to be excellent fathers and most generous friends; I know them to be brave soldiers and sailors; I know they are good chemists, reasonably good doctors, and very boring professors. At the name of Heine all men should doff their hats, but that modern Germany (Germany since 1870) has produced one-fiftieth of the poetry that France has produced—in quality as well as quantity—that it has added anything to the purely creative side of the arts, I utterly deny.

I know that there is Nietzsche.... Perhaps I will write you another letter on Nietzsche, if I may.

I feel that this protest will be put down to “war-fever.” I must refer you to my pre-war articles in English periodicals, and to the testimony of my friends—some of whom are now in America—that such has always been my attitude. It has always been a deep regret of mine that both American and English literature, criticism and periodicals were so undermined with German influences that all gentleness, all intentional good will, all that we mean by the “Latin tradition” was anathema, and utterly despised!

A Hymn to Nature

(_ This fragment, a “Hymn to Nature,” unknown to us in the published works of Goethe, was found in a little bookshop in Berlin, and translated into English by a strong man and a strong woman whose lives and whose creations have served the ideals of all humanity in a way that will gain deeper and deeper appreciation. _)

Nature!

We are encompassed and enveloped by her, powerless to emerge and powerless to penetrate deeper.

Unbidden and unwarned she takes us up in the round of her Dance and sweeps along with us, until exhausted we fall from her Arms.

She creates ever new Forms; what is, was never before; what was, comes never again—everything is New and yet ever the Old.

We live in the midst of her and are Strangers to her.

She speaks incessantly with us and never betrays her Secret to us.

We have unceasing Effect upon her and yet have no Power over her.

She appears to have committed everything to Individuality and is indifferent to the Individual.

She builds ever and ever destroys and her Workshop is inaccessible.

She is the very Children—and the Mother—where is she?

* * * * *

She is the only Artist.

With the simplest Materials she arrives at the most sublime Contrasts.

Without Appearance of Effort she attains utmost Perfection—the most exact Precision veiled always in exquisite Delicacy.

Each of her Works has its own individual Being—each of her Phenomena the most isolated Conception, yet all is Unity.

She plays a Drama.

*Whether or no she sees it herself we do not know and yet she plays it
for us who stand in the Corner.*

*There is an eternal Life, Growth and Motion in her and yet she does not
advance.*

She changes ever, no Moment is stationary with her.

She has no Conception of Rest and has fixed her Curse upon Inaction.

She is Firm.

Her Step is measured, her Exceptions rare, her Laws immutable.

*She has reflected and meditated perpetually; not however as Man but as
Nature.*

*She has reserved for herself a specific all-embracing Thought which none
may learn from her.*

* * * * *

Mankind is all in her and she in all.

*With all she indulges in a friendly Game and rejoices the more one wins
from her.*

*She practices it with many, so occultly that she plays it to the End
before they are aware of it.*

And most unnatural is Nature.

Whoever does not see her on every side, nowhere sees her rightly.

*She loves herself and ever draws to herself Eyes and Hearts without
number.*

She has set herself apart in order to enjoy herself.

Ever she lets new Admirers arise, insatiable, to open her Heart to them.

In Illusion she delights.

*Whoever destroys this in himself and others, him she punishes like the
most severe Tyrant.*

Whoever follows her confidently—him she presses as a child to her

Breast.

Her Children are Countless.

To none is she everywhere niggardly but she has Favorites upon whom she lavishes much and to whom she sacrifices much.

Upon Greatness she has fixed her Protection.

She pours forth her Creations out of Nothingness and tells them not whence they came nor whither they go; they are only to go; the Road she knows.

She has few Motive Impulses—never worn out, always effective, always manifold.

Her Drama is ever New because she ever creates new Spectators.

Life is her most beautiful Invention and Death her Ruse that she may have much life.

She envelops Mankind in Obscurity and spurs him ever toward the Light.

She makes him dependent upon the Earth, inert and heavy; and ever shakes him off again.

She gives Needs because she loves Action.

It is marvelous how she attains all this Movement with so little.

Every Need is a blessing, quickly satisfied, as quickly awakened again.

If she gives another Need—then it is a new source of Desire; but soon she comes to Equipoise.

She starts every Moment upon the longest Race and every Moment is at the Goal.

She is Futility itself: but not for us for whom she has made herself of the greatest importance.

She lets every Child correct her; every Simpleton pronounce Judgment upon her; she lets thousands pass callous over her seeing nothing and her Joy is in all and she finds in all her Profit.

We obey her Laws even when we most resist them, we work with her even when we wish to work against her.

She turns everything she gives into a Blessing; for she makes it

first—indispensable.

She delays that we may long for her, she hastens on that we may not be sated with her.

She has no Speech nor Language; but she creates Tongues and Hearts through which she feels and speaks.

Her Crown is Love.

Only through Love can we approach her.

She creates Gulfs between all Beings and all wish to intertwine.

She has isolated all that she may draw all together.

With a few Draughts from the Beaker of Love she compensates a Life full of Toil.

She is Everything.

She rewards herself and punishes herself, rejoices and torments herself.

She is harsh and gentle, lovely and terrible, powerless and omnipotent.

Everything is ever present in her.

Past and Future she knows not—The Present is her Eternity.

She is generous.

I glorify her with all her Works.

She is wise and calm.

One drags no Explanation from her by Force, wrests no gift from her which she does not freely give.

She is cunning but for a good purpose and it is best not to observe her Craft.

She is complete and yet ever uncomplete; so as she goes on she can ever go on.

To Everyone she appears in special Form.

She conceals herself behind a thousand Names and Terms and yet always is the same.

She has placed me here; she will lead me hence;—

I confide myself to her.

She may do with me what she will: she will not despise her Work.

I speak not of her. No, what is true and what is false; She herself has spoken all;

All the Fault is hers; hers is all the Glory.

While Hearing a Little Song

(_Solveigs Lied _)

Maxwell Bodenheim

*A song flew lazily
Over my upturned head.
It dropped and I could see
The ivoried limbs, the spread
Of swaying, dream-colored wings,
And barely sense the drift
Of slender, cloud-voiced rings
Of notes which seemed to lift
The oval of my soul
Up to their lingering death ...
A purplish pallor stole
Down to my leaden breath,—
It was my melted soul
And the soft death of the throng
Of notes from the slim song.*

Amy Lowell's Poetry

*_Sword Blades and Poppy Seed, by Amy Lowell. _ [_The Macmillan
Company, New York. _]*

In one of his letters, Byron says: “To withdraw myself from myself has ever been my sole, my entire, my sincere motive in scribbling at all.” Such a confession seems strange coming from a poet, and it is a confession of quite a different character which is written on every page

of Miss Lowell's book of poems. There one finds in every line the expression of a personality which tries to realize itself and succeeds in doing so. The unity as well as the interest of the book is in this very development of a strong personality, of which a new and original aspect is revealed in every poem.

What charms us at once in this personality, and renders the reading of the book a constant enchantment, is a most wonderful imagination—an imagination at the same time creative and representative, rich, varied, overflowing with images and themes. All that life and nature offer is the domain of this imagination; it wakes up at the most unexpected moment and seizes the unseen detail, giving us an idea of the wonderful wanderings through which it must take the person fortunate enough to possess it. Now it is a temple; now a church; now a beggar; a blue scarf; the distant notes of a flute; or the nocturnal noises of a London street, which starts it on its way. At other times we find the imagination at play with itself, so to speak, creating out of nothing a historical or legendary atmosphere, or opening a philosophical vista, as in *The Great Adventure of Max Breuck*, *The Basket*, or the poem from which the book takes its name. Each one of these poems (and several others also) has its own special atmosphere, precise in its complexity and different from all the others.

In the style itself, in the development of the subjects, one finds the same quality. It seems as if the pen were too slow to note the multiple images which offer themselves to the mind of the poet. They accumulate themselves, sometimes, in a manner not unlike that of Victor Hugo, forming long periods in which the idea is turned in all possible ways, presented from all angles and in every natural or artificial light.

It is not only the richness of the images, but their quality, which reveals the power of Miss Lowell's imagination. We all experience at every minute of our lives an infinity of sensations of which we are more or less conscious. It might almost be said that we are poets in exactly the measure that we realize and enjoy our sensations. The real poet not only registers his sensations, but is able to awaken in the mind of his readers the sudden recollection of those visual or auditive impressions which have never before reached his consciousness. This is what often delights us in *Sword Blades and Poppy Seed*. It gratifies us to feel that we are able to understand these subtle comparisons, these curious and unexpected alliances of words, such as those in the first poem of the book, where, to define certain shades of porcelains the poet speaks

*Of lustres with so evanescent a sheen
Their colours are felt, but never seen.*

Also in the first poem entitled *Miscast*, where she speaks of her mind as

*So keen, that it nicks off the floating fringes of passers-by,
So sharp, that the air would turn its edge
Were it to be twisted in flight.*

To help her imagination, Miss Lowell possesses a faculty which belongs only to the happy few: the gift of words. The astonishing description of arms and vases in the first poem is but one example, if one of the best, of this rare gift.

It is necessary also, in order to study thoroughly this interesting and complex personality, to mention the great dramatic quality of some of the long poems in the book. From that point of view, *The Great Adventure of Max Breuck* seems to me the most interesting. And there is much to be said of the sincerity and depth of sentiment in such poems as *A Gift*, *Stupidity*, *Patience*, *Absence*. All these short poems have something unique about them and constitute one of the greatest charms, and an important part of the value, of the book. It is almost incredible that a little poem like *Obligation*, for example, should contain such a world of thought and restrained sentiment in its ten short lines. I have chosen this poem as the type of this genre, because it characterizes perhaps better than any other this very special trait of Miss Lowell's talent:

*Hold your apron wide
That I may pour my gifts into it,
So that scarcely shall your two arms hinder them
From falling to the ground.*

*I would pour them upon you
And cover you,
For greatly do I feel this need
Of giving you something,
Even these poor things.*

Dearest of my heart.

There is, in these few lines, a simplicity so naive, a sincerity so complete, and at the same time such an intensity of feeling, that we almost feel while reading it as if we were composing it ourselves. And everybody knows that this is the mark of genius. It is rare to attain such perfection in thought and in form as we find in these short poems, which stand on their stems, straight and pure, like wild flowers opening their hearts to the sun.

I should like, in conclusion, to speak of the very new and effective attempts of the author in the free use of all possible rhythms. The preface presents the author's point of view, but I may add that she has been especially skilful in the adaptation of the rhythms to the subjects, a thing which requires great poetic tact and musical sense. To

study this side of the book would carry us too far, for to do it properly a long article written especially on the subject would be necessary.

To those who love poetry, and who are at the same time interested in the progress of new schools, this book must be of the greatest value.

MAGDELAINE CARRET.

Vers Libre And Common Sense

Clinton Masseck, St. Louis:

Vers Libre has no inconsiderable tradition in English verse, as Mr. Arthur Ficke has recently pointed out in THE LITTLE REVIEW. Its progress in French poetry, particularly among modern writers, is familiar to all students. And if we were inclined to forget or to forgive Whitman (meaning in politer terms to accept him and his followers), the recent verse of the Imagiste group and such writers as Miss Amy Lowell and Mr. Max Bodenheimer in our own midst would be likely to force our attention to this interesting form—if I may employ this word in no paradoxical sense.

But *vers libre* is of the moment—new, if you will, in its present appeal. Its modern themes, its unique figures of speech, its wide practice, both in this country and in England, mark it as a new movement, or at least a new recrudescence.

Anything new invites attack; anything new in literature perhaps warrants attack. If it can stand the test, by just such a token, it is worth consideration. But there are those to whom the new is always a thing to be attacked—because it is new, because it is inexplicable according to their own canons of emotion and intellect. Francis Jeffrey, with his famous caption on Wordsworth, “This will never do,” has his echo, futile and otherwise, in every generation of critics. And so we have Mr. Llewellyn Jones, in the January issue of THE LITTLE REVIEW, sending up his protest against *vers libre* in general and Mr. Bodenheimer in particular.

Mr. Jones is markedly distressed. If he were not so much in earnest and so decently—or indecently—polite, so “suedy,” so suave, even scholastic in his handling, he might be amusing. He is also distinctly pugnacious and, as most pugnacious people are inclined to be, he is curiously inconsistent.

In fact, it is a little difficult to determine why Mr. Jones cannot

accept Bodenheim. (He is guilty of reading Meredith, “popularly supposed to be obscure.”) Because our poet writes of “a world of growing sieves, slim squares, powdered souls, cool, colorless struggles, the obstetrical adventures of white throats, and green and yellow dins,” and because Mr. Jones, in the smallness of his soul or environment, has never been able to concoct or to conceive of poetry couched in this garb—let us grant the idea behind it—he straightway announces “This will never do.” Wordsworth, after being so thoroughly “sieved” by the critics, still lives; the divine essence of romanticism was not killed by Jeffrey and his thunder-pellet phrase. Courage, Mr. Bodenheim!

Yet in a really admirable paragraph of summary as to the function of poetry and the relation of a poet to his audience, Mr. Jones lays down the dictum that “the poet sees the world as we do not see it. Consequently, he can put a new complexion on it for us. The world is pluralistic, and so are we. Intellectually we may be of the twentieth century, but emotionally we may be born out of our due season. Then let the poet of that due season mediate to us the emotional life that we need.... By his aid alone we may get outside of our own skins and into the very heart of the world.”

The last words of this statement are peculiarly significant in this connection. “By his aid alone we may get outside of our skins into the very heart of the world.” What is the heart of the world? I do not know it all, emotionally or intellectually, although if I were to trust one of these endowments in order to render judgment upon poetry, I should choose the first. On the other hand, Mr. Jones does not know the entire heart of the world; nor does Mr. Bodenheim. But we may each of us know some little corner of this heart that the other does not or cannot ever know. For some of us poetry remains but the supreme expression of mere external beauty, for others the expression in consummate form of a purely intellectual process; to others poetry is a weapon wherewith to pierce the veil of externality and to expose the hidden but the real reality. The late William James once declared that we were standing on the verge of new discoveries in feeling and knowledge; that just beyond us lies a world of new adjustments and new experiences. Of course, in this instance, James had reference to our new appreciation and estimate of the value of mysticism in the judgment of certain phases of religious experiences. But the thing holds true even in poetry; the line between the poet and the mystic has yet to be drawn. I, for one, should not want to think myself incapable of enlarging either my soul or my appreciation. If anybody can show me whether in new terms or not a hitherto unsuspected and unknown aspect of beauty, I shall be content to accept that person. I would go further; I should be very thankful that I had obtained a new point of view with which to regulate both my emotions and my intellect.

I, for one, saw and felt and appreciated the appeal of the much-discussed “sieve” poem. To be sure, along with Mr. Jones, I had

previously thought of a sieve only in relation to ashes and garden earth—and even of that “little triangular sieve that fits into kitchen sinks.” But if some one can come along and convince me that this hitherto vulgar and despised implement has inherent in it the possibilities of metaphysical development, and that a certain person can be likened to a sieve, why, then I have learned a new aspect of beauty.

And hence, it would seem to me that Mr. Bodenheim has fulfilled every single requirement that Mr. Jones has put upon the poet. And the only reason Mr. Jones cannot appreciate these little poems is because, intellectually and emotionally, he is “born out of due season.”

After all, “All art is convention.” The Alaskan Indian, with his grotesque—to us—totem poles, cannot understand the smooth and plastic strength of much of classic sculpture. The African Negro, with his Campbell-soup-can earrings and his Connecticut-made curtain ring bracelets, cannot appreciate the effect of simple unadornment. Yet in any case the point of view, the impelling instinct that leads toward beauty, is the same for any person, any race, any civilization. Let us be honest and admit this. Let us sincerely seek and discover the philosophy that guides every new movement, whether in fashion or food or poetry.

Yet it seems to me that we are too prone to accept poetry and to judge it from a too utilitarian point of view. We would make it stand the same test that we apply to religion, to household furnaces, and other things that have been long tried. We ask ourselves when some new manifestation of it arises: “Will it do the trick? Will it comfort and warm and sustain us in the way that we have been accustomed to being comforted, warmed, and sustained by that which has already been accepted?” Yet if a new form discovers a new idea, if it tears away the covering with rough and clumsy hands in order to show the emotions, a fresh significance or a bold interpretation, we jump back in terror and horror.

So it is with vers libre at the present moment. Because it shows us new things, and a new and perhaps at times an awkward manner, critics fed on the diluted sentimentality of Longfellow—or even the classic and obscure Meredith—revolt. Eventually they will accept it; they must. Those that are not fools must remember that history repeats itself; that to cite but a recent instance, Manet and Monet and Sisley, in painting, are accepted where forty-five years ago they were characterized as fools and madmen. After time has crystalized the unusual into the conventional, and the crystals are as common and as pretty as only time and much practice can make them, the critic, along with the man in the street, will be content to partake and to appreciate. It will be then too late; what was once unique and rare will be common and banally uninteresting; a new awakening will then take place, and once more the world will witness the same absurd attack of the critics.

In this connection, in our future judgment of *_vers libre_*, let us recall the wise and simple words of R. A. M. Stevenson: "The test of a new thing is not utility, which may appear at any moment like a shoot with the first favouring breath of spring. The test is the kind and amount of human feeling and intellect put into the work. Could any fool do it? Now, in this matter of depicting truth, there are eyesights of all grades and breadth, of grandeur, of subtlety, and art has more than the delicacy of a tripos examination in tailing out as in a footrace all the talents and capabilities of the competitors."

Go to it, Mr. Bodenheim!

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Two Poems

FRITZ SCHNACK

(*_Translated from the German by William Saphier_*)

Blooming Sunlight

*Sharp rips the plow
And roots the day into the opened field,
And kneads the light and splendor of the world
Into the conquered darkness.*

*In summer, between close rows
Of waving blades, grow flowers
Blooming buried sunlight.*

Evening Gift

*Spread like the palm of a hand
Lies at bottom the evening, gold and red.
Every man may take as much as he likes
Of its beauty, up to the farthest hilltops,
As if it were wine and bread
Handed out to feed hungry souls
And to fill with light the thirsty.*

*I stroll alone on gentle roads into the splendor
Bathing my face in a thousand rosy waves;
Far away like smoke from a black stack lies my pain.
I know it, yet I wander.
We may, like expectant children, be blessed.*

Winter's Pride

George Soule

*Intolerant wind, cold, swift over the sand,
An icy-silver sun upon the sea,
Back-spraying plumes of molten white
Wind-lifted from the curling breakers' tips
That proudly charge the shore with steady roll
And crisping plunge,
The soft advance of foam—
Its million breaking bubbles,
Its elfin rush and tingle;*

*A thousand gulls awing,
Startled to dipping flight and curving glide,
Their flashing arabesques against the sun
Twisting a thousand beauties never still
Until they rest, fearless, lifted and falling
Upon the surging surf;*

*And you and I
Striding the flat, resilient sand,
Seeking the distance tirelessly,
Our faces burning,
Our speech of silence made,
In equal freedom joined perfectly,
And our uplifted spirits
Plumed like the waves, exulting with the gulls;*

*These things are potent
To cleanse us through the years
And to redeem
All dull and sluggard hours;
These things are proof
Of all bright beauty, all swift ecstasy.*

The Acrobat

Eloise Briton

*Poised like a panther on a bough
He swings and leaps.
His taut body flashes clear,
And in a long blue arc cuts the hushed air
Tense as a cry.
The keen, sharp wind of Death
Blows after like his shadow, and I feel
A strange beast stir in me.
I almost wish
That which I cannot think,
A scream, a falling body ...
A new thrill!*

*But he shoots onward, arms outstretched
To clutch at life as it speeds past.
His hands grip vise-like;
With a wrench
That half uproots his fingers, he has caught,
And airily
He twists about the bar
And comes to rest.*

*Sidewise he sits, and carelessly
High up among the winds,
His taut body
Grown lax and restful.
He smiles—
As a vain child, pleased with himself, he smiles,
While our applause comes up
Like incense.
He breathes a moment deeply.
Then again the supple form grows tense,
All wire, all vibrant,
Poised for one tingling breath
Before another flight.*

*I watch him
And a quick desire comes over me
Of those slim hips,
Those long! clean! slender limbs
That stand for health, and for the sheer*

*Keen beauty of the body.
I desire him.
And I desire the spirit of the man,
The bodily fearlessness,
The reckless courage in a swaddled age.
I desire him.
How lithe and firm would be the child
Of such a man....*

A Young American Poet

RICHARD ALDINGTON

It is the defect of English, and in a lesser degree of American, criticism that such criticisms as are not merely commercial are doctrinaire. The critic, that is to say, comes to judge a work of art not with an open mind but with a whole horde of prejudices, ignorances, and eruditions which he terms "critical standards." "A work of art," you can hear him say, "must be this, must be that, must be the other," when indeed a work of art may well be no such thing. Just now the cry is all for "modernity," for lyrical outbursts in praise of machinery, of locomotion, and of violence. And the "critics" obediently fill their minds with these prejudices until at length you discover them solemnly declaring that a work of art has no value except it treat of machinery, of locomotion or of kindred subjects! I have yet to find the critic who approaches his job in the right spirit; who asks himself first, What has the artist attempted to do?, and then, Has he succeeded? The commercial critic is of course the more reprehensible; the doctrinaire critic is nevertheless a serious menace to that liberty of the arts of which one cannot be too jealous. In England especially the doctrinaire critic reigns. Yesterday it was all Nietzsche; then Bergson; now there is a wild fight between a dozen "isms," combats between traditional imbeciles and revolutionary imbeciles. So that one spends half one's time becoming an "ist" and the rest of the time in getting rid of the title.

The neglect of the poems of the young American poet—H. D.—who is the subject of this article, is due, I think to the following facts. The author, who apparently possesses a great degree of self-criticism, produces a very small bulk of work and most of it is lost in magazines; such work as attained publicity was judged, before being read, from its surroundings; the work being original, seemed obscure and wantonly destructive of classic English models (you must remember that there are very, very few people in England who have the faintest idea of what is meant by *vers libre*); the use of initials rather frightened people; and the author had no friends among the professional critics.

Now America has this advantage over most European countries that its inhabitants are mostly willing to accept a fresh view of things. The lack of a “tradition” has advantages as well as disadvantages. An American author, then, is less likely to see things in a conventional way, and is less likely to be deterred from any novel and personal method of expression. (For in 1911, when H. D. began to write the poems I am considering, *vers libre* was practically unheard of outside France.)

If I were asked to define the chief quality of H. D.’s work I should say: “I can only explain it by a paradox; it is a kind of accurate mystery.” And I should go on to quote the ballad of Sir Patric Spens in which from a cloudy, vague, obscure atmosphere, where nothing is precise, where there is no “story,” no obvious relation between the ideas, certain objects stand out very sharply and clearly with a very keen effect, objects like “the bluid-red wine,” “the braid letter,” the young moon in the old moon’s arms, and the ladies with “their fans intil their hands.” And then I should go on to say that this “accurate mystery” came from the author’s brooding over—not locomotives and machinery—but little corners of gardens, a bit of a stream in some Pennsylvanian meadow, from memories of afternoons along the New Jersey coast, or of a bowl of flowers. Curious, mysterious, rather obscure sort of broodings with startling and very accurate renderings of detail. And then I should explain the author’s use of Hellenic terms and of the rough unaccented metres of Attic choruses and Melic lyrics—like those fragments of Alcaeus and Ibycus and Erinna—by pointing out that it is in those poems—the choruses in the *Bacchae*, for example—that this particular kind of brooding over nature found its best expression.

Let me quote a portion of a poem to illustrate these qualities: the quality which I have called “accurate mystery,” the quality of brooding over nature and the quality of spontaneous kinship with certain aspects of Hellenic poetry. I take it that, if one liked to be specifically modern the poem could be called “Wind on the New Jersey Coast.” But the author’s innate sense of mystery, of aloofness, just like that of the anonymous author of *Sir Patric Spens*, makes her place the action in some vague, distant place and time. Though it be contrary to current opinion I hold that the poem gains by this.

HERMES OF THE WAYS

*The hard sand breaks,
And the grains of it are clear as wine.*

*Far off over the leagues of it,
The wind,
Playing on the wide shore,
Piles little ridges,*

And the great waves break over it.

*But more than the many-foamed ways
Of the sea,
I know him
Of the triple path-ways,
Hermes,
Who awaiteth.*

*Dubious,
Facing three ways,
Welcoming wayfarers,
He whom the sea-orchard shelters from the west,
From the east
Weathers sea-wind;
Fronts the great dunes.*

*Wind rushes
Over the dunes,
And the coarse, salt-crusted grass
Answers.*

*Heu,
It whips round my ankles!—etc., etc.*

I am not willing to have that poem read quickly and cursorarily, as one reads a column of newspaper print. It must be read with some of the close, intense attention with which it was written. Each word and phrase were most carefully considered and arranged. The reader must remember that the object of such writing is not to convey information but to create in the reader a mood, an emotion, a sense of atmosphere. Mr. Yeats is right when he complains that newspapers have spoiled our sense of poetry; we expect poetry to tell us some piece of news, and indeed poetry has no news to tell anyone. Its object is simply to arouse an emotion, and no emotion is ever aroused in a person who skims through a piece of poetry as he skims through a journal.

When I read that poem I have evoked in me a picture—like a picture of Courbet or Boudin—of a white sea roaring on to yellow sands under a bright sky, with the wind sweeping and whistling in the dunes. And I have a feeling that it is a magic sort of picture, of somewhere a great way off, where it would not surprise me to find the image of a god at the cross-roads, with the offerings of simple people about the pedestal. And at the same time I always remember bathing from some sand-dunes near Rye, in Sussex, on a very windy afternoon, when the sand blinded me and the sharp grass cut my ankles as I ran down to the water.

I cannot, of course, tell what sort of an effect such writing has on other people. It may be that I am especially sensitive to it. But let me

quote another of the author's poems, conveying a totally different mood.

SITALKAS

*Thou art come at length
More beautiful than any cool god
In a chamber under Lycia's far coast,
Than any high god who touches us not
Here in the seeded grass.
Aye, than Argestes,
Scattering the broken leaves.*

If you ask me to say precisely what that "means" I could only explain it in this way. When I read that poem I experience the emotions I should expect to receive if I were lying in a sunny meadow on some hot late September afternoon—somewhere far inland, where there would be a great silence broken very gently by the rustle of the heavy headed grass and by the stir of falling beech leaves—somewhere so far inland, somewhere so hot, that it would come as a shock of delighted surprise to think of a "cool god in a chamber under Lycia's far coast." It does not annoy me that I have never been to Lycia, that I have no more idea who Sitalkas and Argestes were than who Sir Patric Spens was; it is all one; I get my impression just the same, which, I take it, is what the author aimed at. And indeed the odd unknown names give it a very agreeable sense of mystery and of aloofness.

Such are some of the qualities of the work of the young American who hides her identity under the initials H. D. I believe her work is quite unknown in America, though, before the war, I remember seeing some comment on it in a French literary paper. It was in another French review that a critic complained that this author was not interested in aeroplanes and factory chimneys. Somehow I feel quite coldly about factory chimneys when I read sudden intense outbursts of poetry like those I have quoted and like this:

*The light of her face falls from its flower
As a hyacinth,
Hidden in a far valley,
Perishes upon burnt grass.*

Ten Grotesques

Arthur Davison Ficke

I. WHY WOMEN HATE ARTISTS

*Thanks, beloved; here's your pay.
Now get you quickly out of the way.
For there are many more things to do;
And all my pictures can't image you.*

II. THE PRUDENT LOVER

*I dreamed a song of a wild, wild love
And purposed to follow her flying hair,
Singing my music, through vale and grove,
Till dusk met the hills—and I clasped her there.*

*But—mumbling ancient I have become!—
I sang two staves, and then gave o'er;
And carried my song with prudence home;
And nailed it as motto above my door.*

*Now, the angels in heaven will crown me with bays;
And give me a golden trumpet to blow
When at last I die, full of virtuous days ...
But my wild, wild love—will she ever know?*

III. A POETRY-PARTY

*Fronting a Dear Child and an Infamy
You sat; and watched, with dusk-on-the-mountain eyes,
The marching river of the beer go by,
Alert in vain for a band-crash of surprise.
I also! Dawn, that in respectful way
Entered a-liveried, could no lightnings rouse
For which I watched; the calling-card of day
Flushed with no guilt your Hebridean brows.
Wherefore the Infamy and I went down
Into a street of windows high and blind.
His face, his tongue, his words, his soul, were brown.
But from a window lofty and left behind,
Like a silver trumpet over the gutter-dirt,
You waved!—(I know not what; perhaps a shirt.)*

IV. PORTRAIT OF A SPIRITUALLY DISTURBED GENTLEMAN

*O piece of garbage rotting on a rug,—
To what a final ending hast thou come!
Art thou predestined fodder of a bug?*

*Shalt thou no more behold thy Dresden home?
When green disintegration works its last
Ruin, and all thy atoms writhe and start,
Shall no frilled-paper memories from the past
Drift spectral down the gravy of thy heart?
Can the cold grease from off the dirty plate
Make thee forget the ice-box of thy prime,
And soon, among the refuse-cans, thy fate
Blot out the gay fork-music of old time?
Ah well! all music has its awkward flats—
And after all, there are the alley-cats!*

V. PORTRAIT OF THE INCOMPARABLE JOHN COWPER POWYS, ESQ.

*When first the rebel hosts were hurled
From heaven,—and as they downward sped
Flashed by them world on glimmering world
Like mileposts on that road of dread,—*

*One ruined angel by strange chance
On earth lit stranded with spent wing.
There, when revived, he took his stance
In slightly battered triumphing.*

*And still he stands; though lightning-riven,
More riotous than ere he fell,—
Upon his brow the lights of heaven
Mixed with a foregleam out of hell.*

VI. TO AN OUTRAGEOUS PERSON

*God forgive you, O my friend!
For, be sure, men never will.
Their most righteous wrath shall bend
Toward you all the strokes of ill.*

*You are outcast—Who could bear,
Laboring dully, to behold
That glad carelessness you wear,
Dancing down the sunlight's gold?*

*Who, a self-discovered slave,
As the burdens on him press,
Could but curse you, arrant knave,
For your crime of happiness?*

All the dogmas of our life

*Are confuted by your fling,—
Taking dullness not to wife,
But with wonder wantoning.*

*All the good and great of earth,
Prophecying your bad end,
Sourly watch you dance in mirth
Up the rainbow, O my friend!*

VII. IN A BAR ROOM

*Across the polished board, wet and ashine,
Appalling incantations late have passed.—
For some, the mercy of dull anodyne;
For others, hope destined an hour to last.
Here has been sold courage to lift the weak
That they embrace a great and noble doom.
Here some have bought a clue they did not seek
Into the wastes of an engulfing gloom.
And amorous tears, and high indignant hate,
Laughter, desires, passions, and hopes, and rest,—
The drunkard's sleep, the poet's shout to fate,—
All from these bottles filled a human breast!
Magician of the apron! Let us see—
What is that draught you are shaking now for me?*

VIII. THE DEVIL AMONG THE TAILORS

*They groaned—"His aims are not as ours."
He mused—"What end to mortal powers?"*

*They urged—"Your fair ideals have fled."
He smiled—"The living tramp the dead!"*

*They told him—"You have done a wrong!"
He asked—"Which is my faulty song?"*

*They cried—"Your life lies wrecked and vain!"
He laughed—"That shell? Pray, look again!"*

*They shrieked—"Go forth! An outcast be!"
He answered—"Thanks. You make me free!"*

IX. THE NEWEST BELIEVER

Through his sick brain the shrieking bullet stormed,

*Wrecking the chambers of his spirit's state.
The gleam that brightened and the glow that warmed
Those arrassed halls sank quenched and desolate.
Out of the balefully enfolding mesh,
Life he would free from dominance of evil;
And purpose deeper than the weak-willed flesh
Bade him renounce the world, the flesh, the devil.
And as I looked upon his shattered face
Hideously fronting me in that dark room,
I saw the Prophets of the Church take place
Beside him,—they who dared the nether gloom
For worlds of life or silence far away,
So hated they the evil of their day.*

X. SONG OF A VERY SMALL DEVIL

*He who looks in golden state
Down from ramparts of high heaven,
Knows he any turn of fate,
It must be of evil given—
He perhaps shall wander late
Downward through the luminous gate.*

*He who makes himself a gay
Dear familiar of things evil,—
In some deepest tarn astray,
Close-companioned of the Devil,—
He can nowhere turn his way
Save up brighter slopes of day.*

*Plight it is, yet clear to see.
Hence take solace of your sinning.
As ye sink unfathomably,
Heaven grows ever easier winning.
Therefore ye who saved would be,
Come and shake a leg with me!*

Joseph Campbell

_Irishry, by Joseph Campbell. _ [_Maunsel and Company, London_] _

Joseph Campbell holds an enviable position among the present-day Irish bards. His poems are big, vital themes, readable by every intelligent person. In his volume of lyrics—for he possesses to a remarkable degree

the enchanted tongue—he takes you into every walk of life in Ireland. And what goes in regard to life and occupations in England and Ireland holds good in this country and elsewhere. He does not shun the pig-killer, the quarry-man, the mid-wife, the unfrocked, or disgraced priest, the blind man, the osier seller, or even the ragman. The characters are not put before you as repugnance personified; he makes you sympathize, admire, and even love them. You could call it a drama of characters; each one unfolded being a separate act.

How beautiful is *The Shepherd*. You can see the stars, and clearly comprehend the beauty of the simile in which he compares the shepherd to the man of Chaldea. The picture of the pasture of eld looms forth like a marvelous mosaic or mural painting:

THE SHEPHERD

*Dark against the stars
He stands: the cloudy bars
Of nebulae, the constellations ring
His forehead like a king.*

*The ewes are in the fold:
His consciousness is old
As his, who in Chaldea long ago
Penned his flock, and brooded so.*

The Shepherd can justly be compared to Sir Richard Lovelace's *To Lucretia on Going to War*. They have in common the same metallic sweetness. A companion piece in both strength of beauty and lyrical qualities is *The Mother*:

*The hearthstone broods in shadow,
And the dark hills are old,
But the child clings to the mother,
And the corn springs in the mould.*

*And Dana moves on Luachra,
And makes the world anew:
The cuckoo's cry in the meadow,
The moon, and the earthly dew.*

In *The Blind Man at the Fair* there is a truly masterly imagining of the blind one's agony.

*O to be blind!
To know the darkness that I know.
The stir I hear is the empty wind,
The people idly come and go.*

.....

*Last night the moon of Lammas shined,
Rising high and setting low;
But light is nothing to the blind—
All, all is darkness where they go.*

In *The Laborer* he reminds one of Whitman in lyrics. Here he speaks of the open roads, the blue hills, the tranquil skies, and the serene heavens. A beautiful passage from *The Whelk-Gatherer* reads:

*Where the dim sea-line
Is a wheel unbroken;
Where day dawns on water,
And night falls on wind,
And the fluid elements
Quarrel forever.*

What satire, profusely laden with bitter irony is contained in *The Orangeman*:

*His faith, 'Sixteen-Ninety;
His love, none; his hope,
That hell may one day
Get the soul of the Pope.*

.....

*Lives in beauty, with Venus
And Psyche in white,
And the Trojan Laocoön
For his spirit's delight.*

Last, but not least, is *The Old Woman*:

*As a white candle
In a holy place,
So is the beauty
Of an aged face.*

*As the spent radiance
Of the winter sun,
So is the woman
With her travail done.*

*Her brood gone from her,
And her thought as still
As the waters*

Under the ruined mill.

Another Note On Paroxysm In Poetry

Rex Lampman, Portland, Oregon

Quoting Mr. Edward J. O'Brien's instructive article in THE LITTLE REVIEW for January: "Paroxysm is the poetic expression of that modern spirit which finds its most notable expression in the sculpture of Meunier, the polyphonic music of Strauss, the philosophy of Bergson, and the American skyscraper.... It aims to attain and express, with the quick, keen vigor and strength of steel, the whirling, audacious, burning life of our epoch in all the paroxysm of the New Beauty."

Quoting the dictionary, a paroxysm is "any sudden, violent and uncontrollable action or emotion; a convulsion or fit."

The dictionary definition seems more nearly to apply to inspirational poetic effort, such as Poe had in mind when he advanced his theory that a long poem is an artistic impossibility; such an effort is as necessary to any truly poetic performance. Mr. O'Brien's definition refers to a particular kind of poetic effort, which, to achieve its aims, also must be inspirational, and finds its inspiration in "modern industrial and mechanical effort," rather than in all creation, free field for the poet of no prescribed and particular province.

I am totally unacquainted with the sculpture of Meunier, almost as innocent of knowledge of Strauss's music, and of Bergson I know but a little, but I have seen the American skyscraper clutching its black steel fingers toward the blue, amid the rat-tat-tat-tat of the pneumatic riveting hammers. Here in Portland the skyscraper is pre-empting one by one our views of the evergreen hills and the snowy mountains. Perhaps the other things Mr. O'Brien enumerates as paroxyst manifestations are shutting off our views of the eternal verities of life and the silent splendors of the soul—or rather, perhaps they symbolize the materialistic ideals that are walling us away from the things of the spirit.

If we accept these paroxyst manifestations as art, and keep our eyes fixed on them, surely the infinite horizon, with its never-conquered boundaries always beckoning out and on, is lost to us.

But do we accept them? Beyond the skyscrapers are the quiet hills, and however we throw ourselves into the vortices of cities, however often we go down among the red-mouthed, roaring furnaces, however we may acquiesce in, and even exult in and exalt, the materialistic horrors

that multiply around us like monsters in a steamy primal fen, deep in ourselves we know that all these things are vain and vanishing, and that the actual and enduring lie outside and beyond, or within ourselves. The skyscraper is a monument to the Moloch of Rent. The furnaces are those of Baal, in which we give our souls as well as those of our children for sacrifice.

“The evolution of poetry is to be as rapid and terrible henceforth as material evolution,” says M. Nicholas Beauduin, as quoted by Mr. O’Brien. No, the gods will not forbid it, for it is their way to let things run their courses.

Doubtless there were singers, when Babylon was building, who insisted that a new poetry was necessary to celebrate the city, with its walls and towers and the efficient wonder of its sewer system, if it had one. Perhaps these poets, blinking in the glare of the furnaces and confused by the thunder of the shops whence issued the swords and spears and war-chariots, said to each other, “These are the supremest things, the worth-while things, and we must sing of them or be out of date.” And a paroxyst school was born.

But always the heart of man has yearned toward things other than the works of his hands. When the walls and towers and spears and chariots have returned to the earth from which they were fashioned, there still endured the love for those other things, and the joy in their artistic expression.

The springtime, banal as it is as a poetic subject, will remain forever more pleasing to the singer and his audience than can any paroxysm, of however “scientific technique,” proclaiming in “swift, hurtling, dynamic rhythms” the clamor and clangor of an armor-plate factory or the din and danger of a textile-mill. The earth is our mother, and hers are our deepest yearnings, first and last. “She waits for each and all.”

And if the paroxysts seek for power—for power that overcomes and subdues, that smites suddenly or conquers slowly, and recreates again the same—let them look aside from their banging machinery, from all materialistic illusion—from “the poetry contained in modern cities, locomotives, aeroplanes, dreadnoughts and submarines; in a stock exchange, a Wall street or a wheat pit—and behold the power and the marvel, beyond all “scientific marvels,” of Nature, singing slow or fast as suits her business, chanting her inevitable rhythms through the ages, taking back into her patient bosom all the marring excrescence that man for a little while has reared thereon. What is New York or Pittsburg but an itching pimple on the face of the earth? There is much outside incorporate limits, and beyond the sound of mill-whistles and the scream of trains. The earth is scarce disturbed as yet.

“My love is like a red, red rose”—the same song that sang the enraptured

Solomon, or whoever it was that indited the Canticle—will, I believe, outlast any paroxysm which records a “cinematographic vision of modern life.” This is possibly the idea of the paroxysts themselves, they to sing anew as the occasion demands, and keep their product, like that of the movies, down-to-now. But though the words of the love-song perish, some man will sing it again, for joy at sight of his beloved, when springtime urges on the rose. Sappho sang of love, and men search the sea-floor for her fragments.

However, if the paroxysts wish to see their notions expressed in proper relation to all things else, let them read Walt Whitman, who had room for everything, as he lustily proclaimed, in his sturdy chants.

The New Beauty: is there any such thing? Why the adjective?

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